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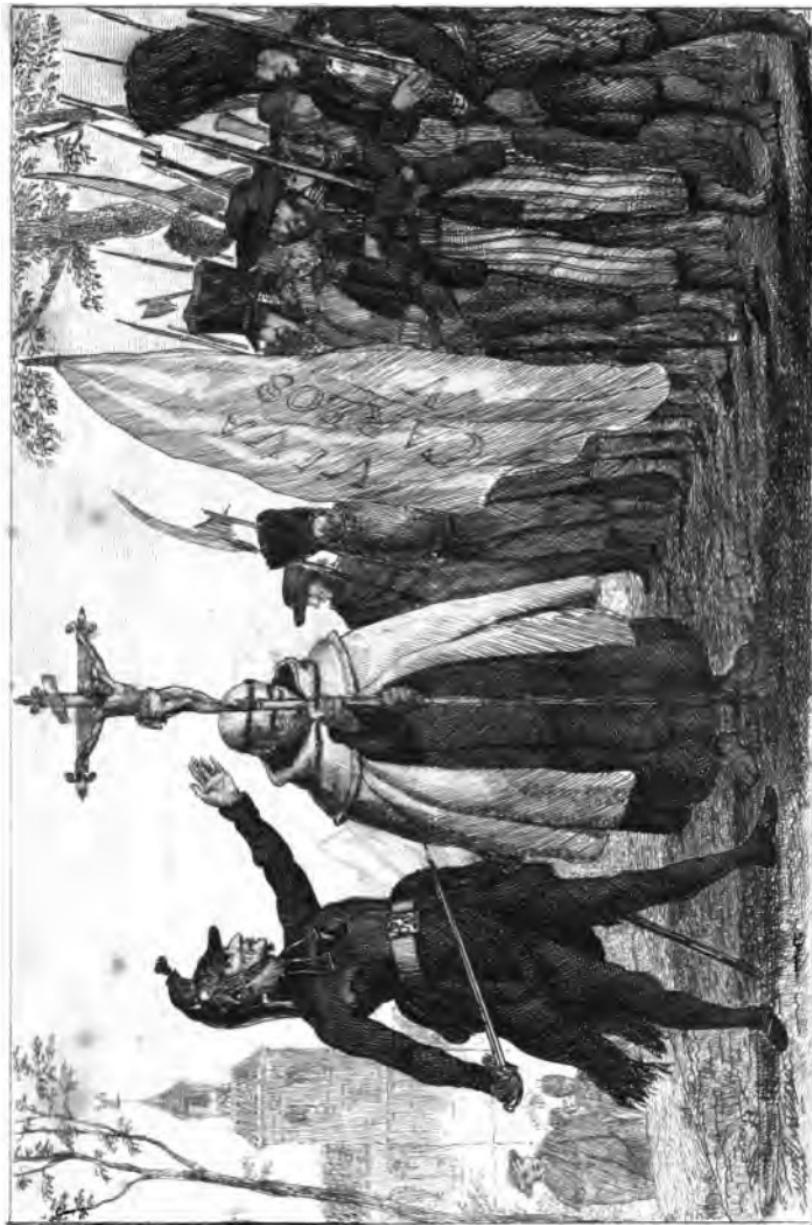
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CARLIST RECRUITS.

Elizabeth Stevenson.

MANUELLA,

THE EXECUTIONER'S DAUGHTER.

A STORY OF MADRID.

"At Madrid, and in every part of Spain, it would be safer to rob and murder on the highway than to take from an image of the Virgin Mary a pin, a bracelet, or a top-knot."—*ANGLE's SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY*.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MANUELLA,

THE EXECUTIONER'S DAUGHTER.

A STORY OF MADRID.

CHAPTER I.

"Qué título tiene el libro ? preguntó Don Quixote. A lo que el autor respondió ; señor el libro en tociano se llama *Le bagatelle*. Y qué responde *Le bagatelle* en nuestro castellano ? preguntó Don Quixote.

"*Le bagatelle*, dixo el autor, es como si en castellano dixésemos los juguetes y aunque este libro es en el nombre humilde, contiene y encierra en sí cosas muy buenas y substanciales."

DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA. PART II. CAP. LXII.

Bayonne—The British Cemetery—An Apparition—An Epitaph — Hotel St. Etienne — Biaritz — La Cave d'Amour—A Cold Bath.

ABOUT half-a-mile north of the citadel of Bayonne, at the foot of a hill, is a small square enclosure, comprising a few yards of ground. A brick wall, originally eight feet high, but now scarcely half that height exteriorly, (in consequence of the clay from the surface of the hill

having been washed down in the course of time,) fences this secluded spot. Within, the ground is at its usual level; but an uninterrupted growth of weeds, seldom if ever pressed by the foot of man, overspreads the enclosure. It was here that, after a terrible and murderous sortie from the citadel, during its siege by the British army in the year 1814, the distinguished heroes who fell in that engagement were consigned to their lasting rest. The flower of the officers of the Coldstream Guards perished in that sudden conflict, so fatal to those who, during the perilous attack, were foremost to defend the British banners. Private subscription, and sympathy for their fate, soon caused the spot to be protected and reverenced; and unadorned, but neat, grave-stones were placed to indicate the bed of each of the heroes.*

At the latter end of the month of October,

* From the field-officer to the ensign, all are, alike, designated; and to the liberality of Captain H——, the present British Consul at Bayonne, (formerly comrade in battle of the now silent occupants of the secluded cemetery,) much credit is due for the repairs it has more than once undergone at his private expense.

1833, a young man was seen hurrying, towards the close of day, in the direction of the cemetery. He had passed the last cottage intervening between it and the citadel, but still looked around in vain for some indication of the place. No path was beaten by the frequent tread of pilgrims, a reflection which served to embitter his feelings. Perhaps the very spot on which he stood had been distinguished by the prowess of some brave soldier who now lay beneath—and a few years had been sufficient not only to obliterate the remembrance of his valour, but also to destroy the very memento erected to perpetuate his memory. At length, his searching eye caught the angle of a sunken wall ; and with breathless eagerness he broke through the brushwood that interrupted his path. A marble slab, built up with the wall, and suffered to project as a stepping-stone, enabled him to gain access to the sacred ground, the only means of entrance, as the elevation around formed an uninterrupted enclosure.

But the step of manhood that had borne him along thus far seemed to desert him now, and his

trembling hand appeared hardly nerved enough to bend aside the weeds that darkened the epitaphs of the dead. One by one his eye pored over the time-worn chiseled letters, now almost effaced.

“Colonel C——, obit A.D. 1814.” Major —, Ensign —, Lieutenant —; the last name expired on his lip :—and the young man sank on his knees beside the grave.

There was nothing effeminate in the outline of his countenance, although at that moment tears rolled down his cheeks. His dark and glossy hair waved over his forehead, which he bared as he dropped his knee upon the ground, revealing the graceful contour of a well-shaped head. Indulging in the intensity of feeling, the solitude around heightened the solemnity of his grief; and he suffered the emotion of his breast to find utterance, as he apostrophized the remains of Lieutenant De Clifford.

When the first effusion of grief had passed, he looked around upon the graves of the comrades in death, and drew earnestly towards a monument that was erected in the centre of the

southern part of the enclosure, and raised above the line of wall. The silence of death was around him, when, raising his eyes, he beheld the tall and elegant outline of a human form standing upon the ridge of wall, and leaning against the monument. He turned pale as he caught the searching eye of the stranger, who seemed, like an apparition, to have risen from one of the tombs. Had he overheard his soliloquy on the grave of De Clifford?— But his surprise increased when he was thus addressed in English:—

“ I have trespassed upon your solitude, Mr. De Clifford,” said the stranger, in a tone of non-chalance, which, however, was not in exact unison with the paleness that overspread his features, “ and I trust you will pardon an unintentional intrusion, which has brought me to the knowledge of your name, divulged under such painful excitement. But let the subject rest, if my speech displease you.”

“ You are English?” rejoined Herbert De Clifford, “ if I may presume to question one so readily acquainted with my name.”

"England is not exactly my country," resumed the stranger, after some hesitation; "but if Mr. De Clifford will allow me a riper acquaintance with him, the Chevalier Montreil will be happy to answer his inquiries."

Both had by this time mechanically taken the path leading to the high road, few more words being meanwhile exchanged between them. On turning into the road, the Chevalier invited De Clifford to take a seat in the britschka that was there waiting for him. This was refused by a negative movement of the head; and the Chevalier, as he stepped in, remarked that he was quartered at the St. Etienne hotel—dined at eight—and should be glad, &c.—but the carriage drove away with him and his civilities, and Herbert slowly passed the bridge over the Adour, and entered the gates of Bayonne.

Bayonne at that period began to be a place of importance, and still continues such, from the rival contentions between Queen Isabel II. and Don Carlos.

When the first communication of the demise

of Ferdinand arrived, the consequences were easily anticipated. From all parts of France, the idle and dissatisfied Carlists collected on the frontiers of Spain. The cause of that prince was their own ; and it was no sooner known in the Biscayan provinces that Isabel had been proclaimed in Madrid, than a simultaneous insurrection burst forth like a volcano, and spread the destructive *lava* of fury and party hatred from one extremity of the kingdom to the other ; all intercourse between France and Spain by the Lower Pyrenees was interrupted ; and, with the exception of a few cabinet couriers, none ventured to take the Vittoria road to, or from, Madrid.

It was at this critical moment that the Chevalier Montreil had arrived at Bayonne on his way to Madrid, and found himself compelled to halt until communications were re-opened ; for in the commencement of the insurrection it would have been hazardous, however high and imposing a traveller's rank, to venture through so lawless a district.

Bayonne possesses little attraction for the gay

and the dissipated. The windings of the Adour produce some change of scenery, but a day's ramble may suffice for an acquaintance with all the most interesting views. The Chevalier had frequently visited every picturesque point around, and the burial-place of the English officers had more than once terminated his promenade or drive : that day had afforded the incident of a fellow-visitor to the secluded spot.

When he returned to his hotel, there was a train of travelling carriages drawn up before the door, and considerable noise and confusion within the house. As he entered, the master, bowing, advanced towards him, and was about to speak, when the valet of the Chevalier stepped between them.

“ Monsieur, they have taken your apartments from you,” said he; “ the Duke of —— the Lord knows what, insists upon having them, though *I* insisted he should not.”

“ Mais, Monsieur,” said the innkeeper, “ c'est un grand Seigneur, Duc de San Carlos, Comte de ——, Marquis de ——, Seigneur de —— !”

“ Eh bien !” said the Chevalier.

"Pardon, Chevalier; c'est un personnage qu'on ne refuse pas."

"That is to say, you cannot refuse his money.
What does he offer you?"

"Twenty piastres a day."

"Louis," said the Chevalier, "pay the fellow thirty. You will tell the grand Seigneur, Mr. Innkeeper, that *now*, of course, you cannot refuse the Chevalier Montreil."

The Chevalier dined alone, but not till later than his usual hour. Louis was instructed to admit a young stranger of the name of De Clifford, should he appear; but Montreil had discussed the merits of a third bottle of hermitage unmolested; and having coquettled with sleep till he had fairly secured it, consigned himself to his valet's care, whose assistance was now of some importance to enable him to gain access to the alcove where stood his bed.

A gloomy, rainy, foggy morning succeeded—one of the last of October. The Chevalier awoke at twelve; but on learning that the weather was unfavourable, again courted his pillow, and it was exactly three P.M. when he

eventually made an attempt to rise. Having devoured a substantial breakfast, together with the contents of the *Journal des Pyrénées*, the *Gazette de France*, and the *Constitutionnel*, he sallied forth as usual for a morning ramble, in the hope of chasing away his insufferable ennui.

The line of coast extending west of Bayonne is remarkable for abrupt and perpendicular rocks that stretch into the sea, and are continued far along the coast of Spain. About four miles from that city, at Biarritz, people from the whole department of the Lower Pyrenees congregate for the purpose of sea-bathing; and this, during the summer months, gives animation and gaiety to the scene; but from the commencement of October, it begins to be deserted, and none remain but the neighbouring villagers. Idlers, however, who arrive at Bayonne, are induced at all seasons to ramble along this part of the coast, and to visit a spot which a circumstance connected with the romance of real life has rendered interesting.

It was in this direction that Montreil took his way on the afternoon of a day that closed

painfully to many a heart in Bayonne. A hurricane had been gathering at sea, and that night many a wrecked fisherman's cold body drifted on shore, to be bathed with the bitter tears of afflicted relatives; but, though stormy, the weather was not yet totally discouraging when the Chevalier started from the hotel, and he was nearer Biaritz than Bayonne when its violence began to increase. Charmed with the romantic scenery, he was loth to lose the present opportunity, and wandered among the broken fragments of rock yet uncovered by the rising tide, to enjoy the bold deformity of the coast,—a scene perhaps congenial to a mind of strong but ill-regulated powers.

The sea, however, was gathering in the bay, and rolling on to land under the redoubled impetus of a south-wester; observing which, he hastened to survey the spot that attracted the curiosity of visitors; and, led by a village cicerone, directed his steps to the *Cave d'Amour*, whilst his conductor, with the agility of a chamois, skipped over the flinty surface of the rocks, and, appropriately to the object of their

cruise, sang in the Basque dialect the ancient romance that records the disastrous story of the *Cave d'Amour*.

But Montreil, unacquainted with the Basque language, was not able to appreciate the merits of the ballad, and had previously satisfied himself with a mere prosaic account of the interest attached to this romantic spot, of which the following is a transcript :—

An ill-starred couple, whose loves were opposed by sordid parents, sought refuge from their worldly trammels in a cavity of the rocks of Biaritz. The fates, equally unpropitious, welcomed them to this rude chamber only to close it upon them as a tomb ;—for the sea, forced by a hurricane beyond its usual boundary, inundated the cavern, and, upon the retreating of the waters, the lovers were found lifeless, lockéd in each other's arms.

The last couplet was but faintly heard by Montreil, as the blast of the gathering tempest carried away the notes of his cicerone ; and they had gained the sand-bank that now almost closes the mouth of the cave, when Montreil's arm was

suddenly caught by his little conductor, who pointed to a jutting rock sunk midway in the coming tide. A young man was seen struggling to gain the shore, in some peril of life. Twice had his hands endeavoured to fasten themselves on the water-polished stone that peeped above the surface, but the slippery moss gave way with his grasp, and he successively fell back into the sea. It was vain to attempt to swim, for the sunken rocks left uneven depths, and each succeeding wave struck with such violence against the crags, that their return threatened destruction to human life.

"That foolish Englishman will be drowned," said the fisher-boy.

"You know him?—is he an Englishman?"

"What else should he be?" said the boy; "none but Englishmen and wild-fowl would go out in such weather."

But the compliment to the British character was lost upon the Chevalier's ear, who ran among the rocks with great agility, and, leaping amidst the crags and foam, arrived in time to catch the exhausted youth by the arm.

The raging element that rolled on to land seemed now to be encountered by another that came down from the skies ; and Montreil, who had succeeded in bearing the exhausted young man up the rocks, was drenched to the skin when they reached the hostel of Biaritz. He summoned the inmates about him with redoubled activity and eagerness, to assist in restoring his half-drowned companion, in whose features he recalled those of the youth whom he had encountered the day before at the cemetery of the British officers. A messenger was despatched to Bayonne for a conveyance ; by the time it arrived, the patient had sufficiently recovered to bear removal ; and in less than an hour they drove up to the hôtel de St. Etienne.

CHAPTER II.

La Tropa. Viva Carlos V.!

Aberca. Preparad mi alojamiento.

La Tropa. Vivan Merino y Cuevillas.

Aberca. No os olvideis de los diezmos.

EL UNIVERSAL.

Tolosa—Rencontre of the Insurgents—A strange incident
to an Extraordinary Ambassador—Vittoria.

IT was a night of more than ordinary darkness when a britschka, drawn by four post-horses, passed with startling rapidity through Tolosa. Not a light enlivened the place, and the patrols at the outskirts successively challenged the travellers, and demanded their passports.

Since the breaking out of the Revolution, this was the first party which had ventured to

proceed from Bayonne to Vittoria, the road being wholly occupied, as far as Pontecorvo, (with the exception of the small garrison at Tolosa,) by the insurgents. Suspicion and misgiving were depicted on the countenances of every piquet. They appeared a devoted corps, threatened with immediate annihilation from the enormous masses of Carlists who were arming all over the provinces.

“Por Dios, Caballero,” said the officer of the vidette, “I would not venture out of gun-shot from the barracks. Beware of the rascals ! they will pick you out a hundred paces off ;—the *frayles* are dead shots.”

“Would they insult the representative of majesty ?”

“As to that, your Excellency, if they do, you must seek redress on the other side of the grave. At all events, I would advise you not to travel by night.”

“Impossible !” said Montreil. “I must not delay on the road.” The postillion cracked his whip, and the horses started again, at full speed.

De Clifford, who accompanied him, had yet to learn the important duties that could weigh

against the personal safety of his companion. There was a mystery in the calm imperturbable humour of the latter that set at defiance every thought of danger. They were travelling through a lawless and revolted district, where the lives of men were at the mercy of every highwayman. The place of their destination was the seat of a government at war with its subjects : and yet the Chevalier, as he dashed along, silenced the insolence of inquisitors with the pompous exclamation of “ Embaxador Extraordinario de Su Magestad !”—whichever *Magestad* had the honour of being uppermost in his thoughts ; and, casting around him handfuls of silver, soon left behind those scrambling recruits of the Pretender who attempted to cross his way.

As the morning sun arose, the travellers approached the romantic hills of Guipuscoa ; and from the misty summit of many a height were seen, streaming towards the valley, glittering files of armed recruits, who were directing their march to the rendezvous of Vergara, for the premeditated attack upon Tolosa.

The warlike spirit of the Biscayans hailed

with ardour the opening of hostilities. The steel that had rusted since the invasion of the French, was now bared to the light and repolished for fresh bloodshed. Accoutrements of every shape, and arms of every fashion, were brought into parade. The peasant deserted the plough—the priest the sacred altar; and, “Dios, and Carlos Quinto !” was the party-rallying cry. At the villages along the road, were frequently seen groups of raw recruits, drilling under the eye of their spiritual pastor, whose saintly hood was now exchanged for a helmet—while the cross, like the blade of Saint Iago, was the emblem at once of faith and of warfare.

“ Deluded wretches !” exclaimed Montreil, as he returned the salutation of a party of armed horsemen on the road ; “ but one may as well reason with the brutes on which they ride.”

“ The hearts of mountaineers partake of the stubbornness of their rocks,” said De Clifford. “ War is with them another word for extermination. It will be a sanguinary contest, should it rage amongst this people.”

“ And assuredly it will,” resumed Montreil.

"They may crown Isabel at Madrid; but, ere the diadem can sit easily on her head, the thorns must be plucked from the bed of roses."

"The contest will soon be at an end if Don Carlos should shew himself in the capital."

"That he will not do: it is a trait of weak men to let the moment for action escape; then, goaded by despair, they will enact a thousand deeds of desperation in order to redeem the golden opportunity which might have led to fortune. Carlos wants decision—it is a kind of cowardice."

"But his wife will urge him on."

"Ay," interrupted Montreil, "*she* should have been the man—and *he* equipped in petticoats."

"After all," said De Clifford, "this is a sorry game:—humanity stakes the odds, and thousands exterminate each other for Peter or for Paul! The vital spring of wealth and commerce is dried up by war; and men, as if they were beasts of burthen, rejoice in some favourite rider, leaving the fields, where they should have dragged the plough of abundance, to yield not even the necessaries of life. The odds are for *kings*."

"They were against the elder Bourbons."

"But Charles only gave way to Louis-Philippe."

"And *his* crown totters!"

"Nevertheless, the few have it against the multitude, and he may play them false awhile. The blood of the Revolution has been shed—the rising generation may afford to bleed also. It seems that there are epochs of dynasties—epochs of bloodshed—as there are epochs of pestilence. Napoleon swayed fifteen years—the elder Bourbons also fifteen: the plague visits the East with added virulence every fifteen years—why should not the branch of Orleans constitute a curse for as many?"

"Then you would infer," said Montreil, smiling, "that the human brain is subject to an hereditary disorganisation—a moral plague, returning periodically? Are you the friend of revolution, Mr. De Clifford?"

"If it be to any good; but—

"For forms of government let fools contest,
Whate'er is best administered—is best."

"There we are at issue," said the Chevalier.

“ The poet, to make a rhyme, marred the truth. The same form of government descended from Charles IX., perpetrator of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, to Louis XVI. The monster, Domitian, succeeded to Titus,—Commodus to Marcus Aurelius.”

They were interrupted by a brawl in the road : the postilion had stopped, and was at high words with a drunken party of insurgents, the leader of whom, with a musket in his hand, came up to the carriage, and insisted on seeing the passport.

“ Embaxador de Su Magestad ——” vociferated the Chevalier as usual.

“ Embaxador del Demonio !” said the drunkard, pointing his musket. “ Shew me your pass !”

This summary fashion of inquiry produced its customary effect of compliance : the Chevalier presented his passport. The Biscayan took it topsy-turvy, and perceiving the immense seal of diploma, returned it as if he had read the contents.

No other interruption delayed the travellers till their arrival at Vittoria, the head-quarters of the insurgents. There all was in motion.—

Recruits were arriving from the beleaguered provinces, and at every turn of the streets they were seen drilling. As the Chevalier and De Clifford were led by an armed escort to the authorities, they were saluted at every step with shouts, from besotted squads, of "Viva Carlos Quinto ! Que muera Cristina !"

In the presence of the men of office, the travellers were closely questioned, and their credentials examined; but it did not escape the observation of De Clifford, that a degree of politeness and protection replaced the coolness first manifested by the commanding officer, and that a private parley with the Chevalier, of a few seconds, had smoothed down all opposition to their progress, whilst the escort now given them to Pontecorvo was more like the protection of a friend than the surveillance of an enemy.

Herbert De Clifford, won by the affability of Montreil, already felt a degree of friendship for him, which had encouraged him to disclose some secret matters connected with his visit to the cemetery; and the proposition to become an attaché to the mission with which the Chevalier was en-

trusted was readily embraced ;—but although confidentially initiated, as he first thought, into the affairs of his companion, every step—every action—seemed to betray a mystery and reserve which yet remained to be unravelled. As for the Chevalier, he had eagerly caught at the disclosure of De Clifford's misfortunes, to engage his society. The guileless confidence that Herbert had placed in him, had communicated a secret, the possession of which gave him a control whereby he might exact, as occasion should prescribe, a complete subjection to his will and machinations. In this view Montreil cajoled his companion by false but specious confessions of his own, only to lure him on to further disclosures and confidence.

Yet, even in this first stage of their acquaintance, painful fears and misgivings sometimes awakened in the mind of De Clifford. The feverish hue of Montreil's cheek — the artificial smile on his lip, which never communicated itself to his eye, could not long deceive : —there was neither health nor joy in the mind they attempted to mask.

Herbert De Clifford was one of Fortune's aversions. Mishap had fixed her seal upon him, even in the cradle. He had grown up with an independence of heart that smiled at the common vicissitudes of fate. Of equivocal parentage, the scorn and contumely of the many taught him to appreciate the kindness and friendship of a few : he felt a joy in receiving even the common courtesies of the world, to which the more favoured sons of earth are insensible. Thus, even with him, life had its zest : affability cheered him ; companionship called forth his sympathy, and benevolence raised the glowing warmth of gratitude.

The unfeeling taunts of those who were acquainted with his birth,—the sarcastic, “Who?—what is he ?”—chastened his spirit ; and “Know thyself !” was his early and most useful lesson: But painful and gross as those taunts were,—as if the hunchback were reminded of his hump, or the cripple of his distorted limb,—there was a consoling voice within, as he looked back upon his youth, unsullied by guilt; whilst the blush that occasionally overspread his cheek was

called forth, not for himself, but for his privileged and insolent accusers. Thus persecuted, he left the place of his birth, and sought the roof of the stranger; and with piety made a pilgrimage to the last abode of him to whom he owed an existence without a name, that he might drop the tear of filial regret upon his remains.

CHAPTER III.

" Not with my hand, but heart : which broke her heart—
It gazed on mine, and withered."

BYNOW.

The Venta—Scientific Discussion of Military Men—
Dangerous Acquaintance—The Consequences.

ON a dismal, damp, chilly evening, at the close of October, a squadron of light horse stopped at a village between Valladolid and Medina del Campo. The dreary waste they had that day traversed had depressed the spirits of man and horse, and a small drifting rain had drenched them thoroughly.

The miserable hamlet would, on any other occasion, as a resting-place, have appalled the

most humble traveller; but our troopers welcomed the smoky huts at which they alighted with real satisfaction. The Curate's hovel was selected for the residence of the officers; it was distinguished from the rest by a modest elevation of half a foot.

The brow of Father Cacastaño lowered considerably as he passed the extremity of a ruby-coloured nose through the small window, (about ten inches square,) at the first sound of the horses' hoofs; and his most catholic phiz assumed an inhospitable frown when he numbered no less than two hundred troopers, as they filed before his door, and saw shortly after a group of five or six dandy cavaliers alight, and shake their dripping cloaks on entering the gate.

“Wine, Señor Cura!”

“Por Dios!”

“Do not swear!” said Padre Cacastaño; “the wine may else turn sour on the lips of the ungodly.”

“I doubt not its goodness, padre; that fine-coloured appendage to your reverence's face shall be my voucher!”

“And a slice of jamon!”

"It is Grenada to the bone, Caballeros; be sparing of it."

"It shall be treasured here!" said the Captain, patting a paunch that was evidently not always lined with tobacco smoke.

Blas was spreading the odds and ends of the Cura's pantry, when, in the confusion, a man, unnoticed by the parties, and muffled in the national capa to the eyes, leisurely approached the fire. He took his seat in the darkest corner of the chimney; and although the whole trunk of an aspen, laid across the hearth, cast a strong light into the centre of the room, yet the volumes of smoke that slowly made their way up the chimney partly enveloped the stranger, and masked the gloomy and dark expression of his countenance.

"Valgame Dios, Captain!" said a young ensign, "these Carlists have more relish for warfare than we of the trade,—for in this skin-soaking weather, I would sooner struggle with our host's fare than go rebel-hunting."

"Heigho!" said the Cornet, who had thrown himself upon a bench, and, by the light of the fire, with a little ivory-handled whisker-brush

backed by a looking-glass, was dressing a jet black moustache,— “ I wish the Carlists were nearer Madrid.”

“ And wherefore ? Are you siding with the Pretender ?”

“ Not in the least ;—but I would willingly side now by my little laughing Vicentita ! Apropos —are you of opinion that Macassar is the best curling fluid for moustaches ?”

“ Decidedly not ;—La pomade rétentive for ever ! that’s the stuff to make them stand on end.”

“ Curling tongs for me !” said another. “ Shew me the twist of a papillotte that will stand hail, rain, and storm as this little cherub has done !” stroking down a moustache three inches long.

The crack of a postillion’s whip interrupted the discussion. The Cura Cacastaño’s dwelling being the only one in the village that assumed the name of a house, was, accordingly, at once curacy, hotel, and post-office. A vehicle drew up before the door, and ere the Cura could make his obeisance, the travellers were within his smoky hut.

The fire was the first object of their attention, as they entered ; and they accordingly drew near it.

“ Horses !” said the elder of the two.

“ A word easily said,” observed the Cura’s attendant ; “ but since the Cura Merino governs in the province——”

“ Rebel !” said the Commanding Officer, “ how darest thou assert the Cura’s power ?”

“ By facts, Caballero !—Government enacts the taxes, and the Cura takes them ; the church takes the tithes, but the Cura is not so modest ; he takes all—cattle and food—masters and men.”

“ Has he been here of late ?” rejoined the Officer.

“ He is always here—at least his spirit. Seek him, and you will not find him ; avoid him, and he sticks to you.”

“ Por la Virgen del Pilar ! we must hunt him down !”

“ Hunt him down, say you ! It is said Merino bears a charmed life.”

“ Fool ! Lead me to him, and I will break the spell !”

“ What, Caballero, if I should ?” half whis-

pered Blas, as he looked around with earnestness ; but the bottle that he held, wherewith to replenish the glasses of the guests, dropped to the ground as his eye caught the glance of the stranger who had slunk into the corner of the chimney.

“ Carr—— !”

“ Do not swear !” said the Cura Cacastaño, to the Commanding Officer. “ Blas, order the mules ! Since the Cura Merino’s visit, (thanks to his reverence,) we are not overstocked with horses, or anything else. The señores travellers must be content with mules.”

The silent stranger, muffled in his capa, had left the room ; but the glance of Blas was riveted upon him, as he leisurely and gently stole away ; nor was it until his master had repeated for the third time his orders for the mules, that he seemed to hear, and proceeded to obey.

“ Horses, instantly !” repeated the traveller who had already spoken.

“ Blas !” bellowed the Cura Cacastaño ; but no one replied.

“ Behold !” said the traveller, as he drew

from his vest the firman of high authority and commission.

"Embaxador!" exclaimed the priest; and he hurried to the door, to hasten the preparation of the mules.

"O Dios!" shrieked the Cura, as he tottered back into the room. "Murder! murder!"

All rushed to the door. The unfortunate Blas had sunk upon the threshold, bathed in his blood;—a knife had struck him behind the ear, and, glancing downwards, had laid open his neck, and pierced his breast. Life was extinct.

An hour elapsed, in the confusion of this event, before the travellers were accommodated with mules. The mourners of the dead collected around the body, and a thousand surmises were entertained as to the author of his assassination; but the stable-boy's account of a stranger, who had hurriedly detached a horse from the manger, and, without a saddle, had spurred him at full gallop away, left no doubt in the minds of the party as to the perpetrator of the murder of Blas; and when the lad whispered in a yil-lager's ear that he had caught that stranger's eye

—and proceeded to mutter his name, the cognomen seemed to possess a charm!—for one and all ceased, or at least did not dare openly, to mourn over the fate of the Curate's servant.

Night grew on apace as the travellers pursued their way over the dreary, sandy plain that extends south of Medina del Campo. The muleteer's voice alone was heard, as he encouraged the speed of the animals,—occasionally cheering them forward, and at other times, jumping off, and running up to the leaders, forcing them, with shout and whip, into the beaten track whenever they deviated from it. But Montreil and his companion were still silent. There is something in cold-blooded assassination that the most sturdy heart, however accustomed to sanguinary scenes, will shrink and turn from with horror. The valet of the venta, who had just before assisted in caparisoning the mules for that very stage, had himself now finished his earthly one. Montreil, as he looked around in the twilight, felt conscious that, however he might be respected in his diplomatic commis-

sion by either political party, he might encounter others, whose sovereign law was plunder, and even destruction of life, when urged by hate or fear of detection. Such are always numerous during civil war,—desperate men, who have burst the shackles of all wholesome restraint, and present a counterpart to those *civil cormorants* who fan sedition only to advance their private fortune out of the spoil of their distracted country.

De Clifford was lost in a reverie that led him back to the murderous times of the French invasion of Spain, when the silent work of extermination was carried on against the oppressors, and a noble-minded people were led to offer a holocaust of victims to their injured country, with impunity of conscience. In that instance, the cause of patriotism had armed the murderer! but the sword that then struck the hearts of detested invaders was now turned in civil war upon fellow-countrymen.

The thread of his reflections was at length broken by a sudden shout from the road side.

The fear-struck postillion ran up to his leaders, whom, encouraged by an extra fee from Montreil, he had put to their full speed.

"Para!" was shouted again. The postillion had then snatched the head reins, but the mules still bore on with the impetus of their gallop, and could not be immediately stopped.

A musket was fired from the road side,—an ordinary and summary fashion with the banditti of the Peninsula, to enforce obedience. The aim was at the leaders, but it struck the muleteer: he fell, entangled in the reins, and the weight of his body at the mules' heads arrested their progress.

"Maldito!" said a fellow who now came up, "did I not call to thee to stop?"

The muleteer was silent.

"So!" said another, who followed, "you have hit the wrong nail on the head—the muleteer instead of the mule!"

"His was the harder, I warrant ye!—but he has learnt to stop now, in good earnest!"

Montreil and De Clifford had meanwhile alighted.

"Señores!" said the former, with the wily

softness and collected air of a man of the world, “by what authority do you interrupt the progress of the representative of majesty?”

“Is your Excellency the Chevalier Montreil?”

“What then?”

“The Cura, Caballero, would be favoured with your presence,” said the man of arms, taking off his sombrero. “Please you to be seated again; we will lead the way.”

“But”—

“Your Excellency has only to be reseated;—the Cura’s pleasure is law;” said the ruffian, as he held the door of the britschka, and gently drew Montreil by the arm towards it.

The travellers obeyed. The shrill whistle of the bandit was now answered from the neighbouring wood. By the moonlight a troop of horsemen was seen advancing. In a few minutes the dead muleteer was disentangled from the feet of the leaders, which were conducted from the track of the road, at a brisk pace, towards the wood; having passed the outskirts of which, the pace of the mules was relaxed, and the escort one and all leisurely lit their cigaritos.

"Por la Virgen del Pilar! our Cura performs more miracles than ever did the blessed Saint Antonio de Padua! How, demonio! was he to know that these outlandish heretics would be here precisely to a minute?"

"Thou hast a thick head, Jacopo, to suppose that he would let thee into his secrets. Tell me, shallow-pate! what it is he does *not* know!"

"Silence, prater!" exclaimed the fellow who had lodged the contents of his musket in the muleteer's head, "and spur on the mules."

It was midnight when Montreil awoke from a nap. De Clifford was lost in wonder at the Chevalier, rather than moved at the critical circumstance of being surrounded by a gang of freebooters. He had attempted to question Montreil, but could extract no information from his apparently sleeping companion.

"Chevalier," at length observed Herbert, "methinks it were well that our accounts were straight with Heaven; for it seems that the lease of our lives is of the length of these ruffians' consciences."

"Or rather say of their gun-barrels. But be

tranquil ; the Cura's horde would sooner slay a convent full of friars, than harm the representative of my master."

"Methinks it would have been more courteous of the redoubtable Cura, had he waited upon you on the road, instead of leading us so many miles out of it."

"Perhaps so ; but he may have his motives : it may be a by-play of his policy—a wish to appear the great man before his brutalized and savage adherents ; to impress upon them a high notion of his connexion with mighty potentates and powerful allies. At all events, we shall see the renowned Cura-soldier, surrounded by his beggar-army."

Montreil again slunk in the corner of his carriage, and either took or pretended to take that respite from care which sleep alone can bestow on the weary, leaving Herbert to his meditations upon the romantic adventures of the journey. But could he have pried into the gloomy soul of his companion, he would have found in its inmost recesses the germ of despair, which like an accusing spirit, jealous of its habitation,

sought the deepest concealment of the breast, never to be dislodged. There was a name stamped upon his heart,—a name that, in his silent and stifled regret, never passed his lips. Like a branded felon, he was marked with it for ever; whilst the indelible impression, though hoarded with all the secrecy of shame, was eternally suggestive of one undying and burning thought. Living images that rival the beau idéal of poets, he had enjoyed, and had exhausted the wealth of fancy with possession; but one form, one memory, he could never expel. It was thus triumphant. For him that victim had sunk into the tomb, and he had seen the coffin closed upon the seraph smile that lit her soul to eternity. He forgot the charm of her artless glance, at once so penetrating and confiding,—he forgot her calm, forgiving resignation, as she slowly and gradually wasted away; but he never forgot the smile of that lip in death, which had never opened to reproach—which would never again with passion meet his own. The curse of memory sank upon his heart; he loved, madly loved, a tenant of the grave.

Thus he existed, without one inspiring hope or soul-felt joy. The stirring but sated passions of youth had settled into a refinement of vicious taste, that needed the aid of artificial excitement and novelty. The appetite of this man of distinction and wealth required the incentive of deep intrigue, or daring villany, to invest with interest his destined prey,—to deck even virgin loveliness for his admiration. He could well read the page of woman's heart; and every new conquest formed a fresh leaf of a story that was hurrying on from one catastrophe to another. Deadened to the common incidents of life, crimes of the heart that come not within the pale of human laws and retribution were successively perpetrated; and, as the work went on, each succeeding chapter seemed to exhibit deeper villany.

Such was Montreil. He even asserted to his intimates that the breast susceptible of love for woman was unworthy of high confidence, and strenuously denied the influence of the sex upon his own. His indifference to female intercourse, while yet in the prime of manhood, had not

escaped observation at the court of——; and the crafty minister of L——, his more crafty master, (who beheld in Montreil's commanding and elegant appearance the personage best adapted to forward his political views at Madrid,) remarked with satisfaction that he had acquired the persuasion of the lip, with the cold calculation of a debauchée's heart, and wore the mask of sincerity on his face to hide the deformity of his mind.

Though a foreigner at the court of——, and moreover an Englishman, it entered the views of Count—— to entrust him with a secret mission of high importance. The offer was eagerly accepted, as it enabled Montreil, from the income attached to the commission, to indulge in all that extravagance from which he had only been excluded by his already wasted resources. And as a pledge of further reward and princely favour, Montreil was decorated with an order of knighthood.

It was with such auxiliaries to the éclat of his own accomplishments and personal magnificence, that he contemplated no less a scheme

than to lay siege to the heart of the Queen Regent of Spain; and already the sanguine minister anticipated the success of a diplomatic intrigue which rested mainly on so weak a foundation as the caprice of royalty.

Yet the head of a *diplomate*, however competent to dictate a protocol, and entangle in the meshes of politics the male ciphers of a cabinet, might err in weaving a snare for a woman's heart; and even the seductive Montreil might not always be the successful hero of a lady's boudoir; although reports gave him reason to hope that Christina of Spain was formed for tender impressions, and that the sceptre of her widowed royalty was ready to fall into the hands of some adventurous wooer.

But Montreil, now Chevalier, wearing the laurels of former conquests, appeared not to notice the creeping marks of time upon his features. Among fashionable coteries, fame preceded him. The spell of former success was to him a favourable precursor; for it is sometimes a perversity of feminine judgment to receive the adulations of the accomplished se-

ducer, and lay the flattering unction to itself of fixing the inconstant; as if the axiom, that "*the vows of a repentant sinner are more acceptable than those from an unerring believer,*" guided their compassion, and that the redemption of a wandering heart was a more glorious achievement than the acquirement of the homage of a pure one.—But even these impressions began to wane, as the traces of dissipation grew more and more visible: and that face, once so handsome, though assisted by the *ruses* of the toilet, wanting the reflection of inward calmness, gradually yielded to the ravages of time.

CHAPTER IV.

*El Doctor Abarca. Sois Merino, ó sois Lutero ?
Merino. Soy el diablo.*

EL UNIVERSAL.

An Original—Sketch from the Life—Birds of a feather—
The Camp—Confidences.

BEFORE we introduce our readers and our travellers to a man well known to the world during the Spanish war of independence, and more particularly so since the commencement of the contention between the present government and the adherents to Don Carlos, it would perhaps be judicious and acceptable to recount the adventures of this extraordinary being, which, although they have appeared in the public prints, may not be wholly present to the memory of all.

DON GERONIMO MERINO, better known in Old Castille as the Cura de Villoviado, is of obscure origin. His parents sent him to college at Lerma, to learn Latin, but he had made little progress when he was ordered home again, to take charge of a herd of goats. Merino continued the occupation of goatherd until the death of the Curate of Villoviado. As there was no person in the district who was able to fill the vacancy occasioned by the demise of this ecclesiastic, he was advised to lay aside the pastoral hook, and receive instruction from a certain *dominie* at Cobarrubias, to enable him to supply the deficiency. After six months' study, with the sanction of his tutor, Merino undertook the sacred charge of minister of the gospel. But the curacy affording only a scanty remuneration, his inclinations led him, in preference, to feed his flock of goats, and range the mountain wilds; and from the first he never officiated at the altar, except on Sunday, on which day only would he desert the care of the *quadrupeds* for that of the *bipeds*.

This singular being was then usually seen mounted on horseback, armed with a fowling-piece, a brace of pistols, and a hunter's knife. He was always accompanied by a boy, whom he called his nephew. This youth was subsequently raised to the rank of lieutenant-colonel by the late King, Ferdinand VII.

Such a roving life soon developed the sanguinary character of the Cura Merino, who afterwards became notorious for most horrible excesses of barbarity. He had two brothers, and a sister of some personal attractions. Every individual of his family experienced the brutal effects of his disposition. His mother, whom he was wont to threaten with the muzzle of a loaded pistol, died from his ill-treatment. His elder brother, known under the name of el Majo, (the Dandy,) and as a smuggler, went over to him in 1810, on the very day that Merino fought an action with the French at Almazan, near Soria. But—will it be believed?—fearful that his brother, owing to his bravery, would be elected, in his stead, chief of the guerillas, he had him assassinated only two hours after embracing him on

his return after an absence of six years. The younger brother, likewise a contrabandista, (smuggler,) known as el Curro, continued to serve against the French under the Curate-soldier during three months; but on one occasion, having ventured to remonstrate with Merino on his cruelty, the monster ordered the drums to be beat, assembled all his men in the market-place of Lerma, and had him barbarously flogged for his audacity. The youth died a few days after from the effects of this flagellation.

The only individual of his family now living is his sister, who effected her escape, as she was in daily apprehension of falling a victim to his ferocity. She afterwards married an honest labourer, and lived, and probably still lives, at Villahor.

Merino may be about sixty years of age. Low in stature, and very thin, he possesses a hoarse stentorian voice; he has large hollow eyes; his temples are so prominent that they have been compared to those of an old horse;

his face is lean and wan, and its expression terrific. Although his appearance denotes weakness, his constitution is very strong. Few men can or do bear more fatigue. His drink is pure water; and, though a Spaniard, he never smokes; he eats little, and takes but a short interval of repose. When he goes on a marauding excursion, he sleeps on horseback. Those who have served under him have never known him to pass a night with them. As soon as the sun sets, he fixes on a place of meeting for the next day, and, followed by a servant, gallops off to the mountains, sometimes ten or twelve miles distant, nor do they see him again till sunrise.

Merino never approved of a uniform for his troops, allowing every one to dress according to his fancy; for himself, he is always clothed in the coarsest garments, and an old hat. When he appears in a village, he is taken for the meanest of his troop, and resembles a ruffian escaped from the galleys.

His arms in war-time are, a sabre, a pair of

pistols, and a short blunderbuss, which he loads with a number of balls at a time. He carries the powder in the pommel of his saddle ; and when he discharges the blunderbuss he takes a handful, applies it to the touch-hole, and is obliged to pass the butt under his right arm and support the muzzle with his left, to resist the shock occasioned by the explosion of this terrible weapon.

The acts of cruelty which this man has committed, will hardly be believed. During the war of independence, and subsequently that of opposition to the constitutional party, forty-eight alcaldes (magistrates) were shot by his order, and in his presence. He never gives quarter to prisoners ; some of the officers who fell into his power were mutilated ; those who survived four-and-twenty hours were shot. The number of prisoners whom he burnt to death, and in whose behalf the clergy and laity of Villahoz had interceded, is estimated at eighty-six.

At the conclusion of the war of independence, Merino was named to a post of some importance, but lost it in a few months afterwards, through his

immoral and brutal conduct. With the grossest ignorance he combines unblushing impudence, and a cynical language of the most disgusting kind.

He was shortly after made a canon of a cathedral; but his extravagant and almost grotesque way of presenting himself in the choir soon disgusted his companions, and excited general ridicule towards him. He was warned of the murmurs that were raised against him; and one day, when all the canons had assembled in chapter, Merino made his appearance, and began to abuse them; one of them answered him with decision, whereupon he drew from his robe the pistols which he invariably carried, and, pointing them at the astounded prebendaries, ordered them to march off in file, with their heads bowed down—which they gladly did; some, against whom he was most invertebrate, considering themselves fortunate in escaping at all.

This event caused much scandal, and the Canon Merino never after assisted at the chapter, although he continued to receive his stipend.

Latterly, he revisited his native place, fixing his residence at Torduelas, a little hamlet near Villoviado. There his time was employed in the chase, and in building a magnificent mansion, which still belongs to him.

At the period of the Constitution, in 1820, Merino remained quiet during the first year. Since the war of independence he had imbibed the greatest hatred towards the clergy ; and had he had the government of the kingdom only forty-eight hours, he would probably have decreed the extermination of every churchman.

It may be asked, why Merino became so opposed to the constitutional system ? A certain political chief had received a letter, stating that he was about to desert the cause. On this vague evidence he caused Merino to be summoned before the authorities, and obliged him to undertake a journey of more than thirty miles to answer certain interrogatories. The Cura was, moreover, not very courteously received ; and they threatened to throw him into a dungeon, and even to sentence him to the *picota*, if he gave any farther indi-

cations of rebellion. They who vented such threats little knew Merino. This man, deeply exasperated, terrible in his cold-blooded revenge, made no answer to his interrogators ; he merely cast a glance upon them, sufficiently significant to those who knew him. He became from that moment an unforgiving enemy to the Cortes, and immediately commenced the relentless injuries he has caused to Spain, especially in Old Castille, where he has always aspired to be absolute master.

With wounded pride he left the presence of that political chief, hastened to an inn, mounted his horse, and returned at full speed to Cogollas ; there he raised his party-cry of rebellion. The district of Lerma alone sent four hundred men to answer the appeal. They did not hesitate to desert their homes, their wives, and their children, to follow a being who had produced enthusiasm among them. Very soon was he at the head of fourteen hundred men, armed with spears, muskets, crow-bars, and knives ; and with this motley, but daring and de-

voted band, he surprised several officers of the Seville regiment, and ordered them to be shot.

Merino is reported to be personally brave. It would be a difficult task to seize his person. He always leads a second horse, well caparisoned ; makes both gallop abreast ; and when he has tired one, leaps upon the other without retarding their speed. It was thus that he effected his escape at Palenzuela, in the beginning of the year 1823, from the troops of Amor !

Merino's warfare is with fire and sword ; he stops the couriers, plunders them of everything ; and everywhere creates horror and dismay.

Such are the details of his life up to the present crisis, as published by his countrymen. His apostacy as a priest, and his present rebellion against Queen Isabel II., are events notorious to everybody. A curate, armed *to the teeth*, galloping over the country, and terrifying the peaceful inhabitants, is such a phantasma, such a disgraceful anomaly, that the pages of

ancient or modern history can hardly exhibit its parallel.

As the cavalcade which conducted Montreil and De Clifford emerged from a thicket, they were suddenly surrounded by a number of men bearing arms of various descriptions ; some wearing the slouched sombrero, others bareheaded, but all enveloped in the sombre dark-brown capa. There was a huge fire a few paces off ; and, in the dubious light of the yet early dawn, the eye could trace, not far distant, the black outline of a few huts. Around the fire, a dense multitude of men was discerned, whilst the red glare revealed their savage and ferocious countenances, as each peeped from the folds of the muffled cloak. The travellers were ordered to alight, and led up to the spot.

With the grotesque gravity and assumed dignity of a man elevated from his own proper sphere, and who hardly knows what terms to hold with himself, the beggar-looking, but indomitable, Cura Merino now advanced ; and the

travellers, as they marked the singular aspect of that being, remembered the stranger, muffled to the eyes in his capa in the chimney-corner of the venta, and recalled the assassination of the unfortunate servant of the inn.

"El Caballero Montreil," hoarsely ejaculated the Soldier-cura.

"Lead me to your chief."

"He stands before thee!"

Montreil extended his hand, and the token of friendship was exchanged.

"Your credentials," said Merino, "proclaim you as one of us. How fares our brave ally, the Duke of C—— R——? You are surprised, Caballero, that I am forewarned!—but the tactics of a general need all the speed of communication. Four hours after your interview with the authorities at Vittoria, the tidings of your mission were brought me. We are friends to Carlos Quinto—our cause is one."

The Chevalier and the Cura had stepped aside.

"What forces have you mustered in Old Castille?"

"The province!" replied the Cura with emphasis.

"The marching number?"

"Thirty thousand men! Por los higados de Dios," ejaculated the gross, the blaspheming priest. "We have more hearts than swords, else the b—— who governs now at Madrid should kneel to me for life!"

"Be of good cheer, then, the cause bids fair! In Ferrol's Bay now rides with lying colours a vessel freighted with fifteen thousand muskets, the present of my master to the friends of Carlos Quinto; with ammunition too. Let her but send her cargo to our partisans; one half is for the North, the other for the valiant Merino!"

"And powder too?"

"Ay, English!—the bullets——"

"Those need we not. Our convent roofs are melted down—the nails that stud their porches, aye! those that fix the wooden images of the cross, now fill our barrels—more deadly far; their rusty points once lodged in human flesh—if but skin-deep—what physic can save it?

But should the vessel be captured by the Christinos ?”

“ Patience!—then another and another shall coast the Biscay shore till every Carlist hand that is stretched for us shall wield a British-bayoneted musket !”

“ Grant, Heaven or hell, this succour, and soon ! Chevalier, I shall visit you in Madrid !”

“ Prudence, Chief !”

“ Rather—prudence, Chevalier ! What need I fear, surrounded by my living bulwarks ? At the capital, what steps propose you ?”

“ Vigilant intercourse with friends, and watchfulness on the foe.”

“ Pasquale !” shouted the Cura. A man of low stature, and past the prime of life, armed from head to foot, ran at his master’s vociferation.

“ Montreil ! behold your servant in Madrid ; when you are there he shall present himself. You may trust him, Chevalier, his wife and little ones are at my mercy. But none betray the Cura of Villoviado !”

After additional arrangements, which were

made in a low key, the britchka of Montreil was drawn up, an escort of the brigand army collected around, whilst the blood-stained hands of Merino folded in friendly embrace the unresisting Chevalier, ere he resumed his journey to the capital.

CHAPTER V.

" Carbon—carbon—carbon
Carbon de encina, carbon.
Quien lo quiera—vaya.
A la Puerta del Sol."

Madrid—Puerta del Sol—Chit-chat—Ominous Reports—
A Warrior.

AT the Puerta del Sol—that central and bustling spot of Madrid—the gossips of all classes assembled as usual; and as the political horizon continually displayed fresh signs of the times, interesting to all, many were the news-venders, news-bearers, news-makers, and news-takers there collected. Far down the street of Caretas whisperers and listeners were observed, as well as in those of Alcala, Mayor, Carmen, and

Montera, in which latter the higher orders took their morning lounge. Yet, though the number of these dealers in information spread like rays from the centre of the Puerta del Sol, there lay the point of communication and origination, and thence the report and the lie circulated with rapidity, gathering in their round that embellishment or detraction which various parties were inclined to give them.—There was a knot of hot-brained Carlists in close conference.

“Our beloved master is at Castle Branco,” said one.

“He has contracted a loan in London,” said another.

“The Asturias have risen, with the Bishop of Oviedo at their head.”

“This is brave news! List! the Englishman Montreil is one of us.”

“What! he lately arrived, who pretends to favour the cause of the Queen?”

“Fudge—fudge! Eye-powder for the Christians! He is a secret agent of the Duke of C——R——”

A few paces off, stood a number of men

using smiles and tokens of reciprocal congratulation.

“Have you read Llauder’s remonstrance?”

“It is a home thrust for Zea!”

“Maldicion upon him! he is at heart a Carlist.”

“What think ye of his new decree? Public shouts are prohibited! It is no longer lawful even to cry ‘Viva Christina!’—that we may set a good example of moderation to the Carlists.”

“But we may say, ‘Muera,—death to Zea Bermudez!’”

“And death to the friars!”

“And death to Señor Carlos de Bourbon!”

“With all my heart! Who is this white-faced foreigner that has just arrived?—this Montreil?—this Chevalier, as he styles himself.”

“A Chevalier d’Industrie, I imagine.”

“A suspicious character, no doubt! They say he is a lover of the Queen.”

“He follows her like a poodle.”

“And the puerco MacMaw is his pimp.”

“The Colonel!—he would sell his soul for a dinner!”

“ Aye,—or for the sash of a general !”

The worthies who were thus the subject of public comment, had in truth laid themselves open to it each by his individual peculiarities. The Chevalier Montreil, lately arrived in Madrid, had sought notoriety through the extravagance of his proceedings, not a little assisted by his singular appearance. Of a tall and commanding person, his light yellow hair, fair complexion, and diminutive but sparkling grey eye, (shaded by straw-coloured eye-lashes,) gave a peculiar cast to his countenance, and marked him as a foreigner amongst the darker complexions of Spain. Yet the commanding and intelligent Montreil could not win the heart : sarcasm was on his lip,—pride and haughtiness in the tone of his voice. The biting repartee was seldom withheld : though he fixed the attention of his hearers, he made no progress in their esteem and regard.

But at Madrid he was yet new ; the single-minded, unsophisticated Spaniard proffered the courtesies of hospitality. He appeared in the saloons of the great to sneer and criticise, and received, as due to himself personally, the civilities

bestowed on him as an Englishman. Like many other of his countrymen, who display abroad an overbearing and contemptuous demeanour, as if they carried in their own persons all the glories of their native land, he thought himself the object of universal admiration, and entitled to that pre-eminence which no portion of his conduct merited.

Not such was the conduct of Colonel Mac Maw. One of—

“That bootless host of high-born beggars”

whom the poet has somewhat illiberally described, he had been sent adrift on the world to ferret his way. In the Spanish war of independence, he had fathered himself upon a relation already distinguished in the contest against the French. MacMaw took the shortest way to promotion. Having followed the march of the army, he took advantage of an English officer's death; stripping the body, he stepped at once into the dead man's shoes, and with successful effrontery obtained that rank in the Spanish which he pretended to have held in the British army.

Having thus far succeeded, he veered from one political party to the other, in the eventful sequel of public affairs, as occasion might require ; and, with that exquisite tact so peculiar to his countrymen, happily always fell on his legs. He had served both with and against the constitutionalists, and Ferdinand rewarded him with the commission he now possessed. He again veered, apparently, towards the present liberals ; but, in the trembling balance of affairs, his enthusiasm was still prudently reserved for the dominant party.

MacMaw, however, was one of those ciphers whose opinion or support is seldom sought ; and he was therefore left unnoticed, fortunately for the preservation of his interests and his head. He had a smooth tongue—ready for “ saint, fer savage, and for sage,” as occasion or good dinners might require. He was, moreover, a serviceable chum, a ready messenger, a peacemaker, (*quere, breaker?*) a cicerone, a court-guide, a corkscrew, and a *nobleman* ; for he was a lineal descendant of Bruce, and could trace his genealogy to the times when the Scots

were cannibals — ay ! to the deluge, or even far beyond it.

Vis-à-vis sat the enraptured MacMaw to Montreil, on their first meeting, at the Marquess of Saint Jago's.

“ We dine at six !” said the Chevalier.

“ Happy !” sputtered the Colonel, with his mouth crammed, and looking his unutterable acceptance of the invitation.

On Montreil's arrival at Madrid, his numerous letters of introduction were soon presented, and instantly acknowledged. The magnificent display, and ostentation of wealth, which he was enabled to make attracted attention : he became the theme of *conversazioni* and *tertulias*. “ Have you seen the Englishman ?” But wonder in Spain is not, as in England, of even nine days' duration ; and, ere the week had passed, Montreil sank to his proper level.

All were satisfied with their own conjectures. The Christinos were sure that he was a Queen's man ; the Carlists were convinced he was their partisan ; whilst MacMaw, as he reeled home

after a splendid banquet at the Chevalier's, vowed, by the immortal Wallace, that he was a diamond of the first water.

It was about twelve o'clock of the day to which we have alluded, when the gossips were holding their numerous and important councils at the Puerta del Sol, that the Chevalier was awakened by his valet before the usual hour.

"A stranger would see your Excellency."

"His name?"

"Pasquale!"

On his nod of assent, the valet ushered him in.

"How fares your Chief?" asked Montreil, as he recognised the swarthy trooper of the Cura Merino's army.

"Well—and near!" said the man, in a subdued voice.

"Near! saidst thou?"

"At San Lorenzo del Escorial—where he must see you forthwith. He holds a conference there with the Bishop of Oviedo and others."

"So near to the court!—'tis dangerous."

"Not to the Cura—rather to yourself to meet

him. The report of his appearance there is already abroad, and will be designedly spread at Madrid."

"It were madness to meet him there!"

"Nay, observe, Sir! It is purposely spread that he is at the Escurial, and thus he advises your Excellency:— Long before the lagging Christinos can reach the convent, his own troops will pretend to fly, whilst he in person, befriended by the fathers of the convent, will expect you in the secret vaults. The Cura, my Lord, advises you to shew enthusiastic zeal for the Queen, and join the detachment that will be sent to defeat him.— There, whilst they suppose the bird flown"

"Enough! I understand—it shall be done." And Pasquale retired, whilst the valet re-entered to assist his master to dress.

The Chevalier was scarcely seated with De Clifford at the breakfast table, when the redoubtable Colonel MacMaw entered the room, evidently much agitated.

"Colonel, what ails you?"

“ Dear Chevalier ! how I regret your dinner party to-morrow——”

“ Explain yourself !”

“ The Cura—the Cura Merino !”

“ Now, my dear Colonel, what has the Cura to do with our dinner ? Shall I send him an invitation ?”

“ Egad ! methinks he will not stand upon ceremony, and will come without it ! He has appeared at the Escurial.

“ I am rejoiced,” said the Chevalier. “ It is my intention to visit the convent to-morrow.”

“ Possibly !” said Mac. “ I have orders to proceed with a detachment immediately : I shall be there !”

“ Send it on before, and follow it with me—we will bring up the rear ! Sight-seeing, feasting, and—but there will be no fighting ?”

“ I hope not !”

“ Right, my brave warrior ! we will have a merry time of it. Colonel, I give you carte blanche ; muster your friends—a select party ; you understand me ? A few petticoats, methinks,

would serve the cause bravely ! Give them the britchka ; De Clifford and I will take horse."

"Excellent, i'faith ! But surely you are not in earnest ? Suppose the Cura——"

"Suppose you moisten this omelette aux truffes with a sip of chambertin ? And don't forget the women, Mac ! I will order the substantials !"

"Don't forget the fluids ;— some lait de Venus, or liqueur des braves, for the carriage-pocket !"

"That we will carry about us ! We start at day-break, for the cause of Isabel Segunda que viva !"

CHAPTER VI.

"Well, 'tis no matter; honour pricks me on. Yea; but how if honour prick me off, when I come on? How then? Can honour set-to a leg? No. Or an arm? No. Or take away the grief of a wound? No. Honour hath no skill in surgery? No. What is honour?"

FALSTAFF.

The Eighth Wonder — A Pic-nic — The Catacombs —
A Conclave.

THE gloomy spires and belfries of the Escorial were buried in night. The blast from the Guadarrama whistled its wintry notes around the angles of the building, and swept with searching keenness over the plain that intervenes between it and the Casa del Campo. Not a light illumined one of the thousand casements of the convent, and the Hieronimite Fathers were all supposed to be retired to their several pallets.

But the little neighbouring town of Escurial witnessed at that season the novel event of animation. The troops commanded by Colonel MacMaw were dispersed for quarters in the few ventas—whilst himself, with the remainder of Montreil's guests, were stationed at the Fonda, every apartment of which was occupied by the Chevalier and his numerous retinue. Seldom did the master of the inn bring forth such a display of viands as the auxiliary care of Montreil's cook had supplied; and when mine host's modest pulchero (alias, olla podrida,) had made its debut and exit without a caress even from Mac Maw, it was superseded by a culinary exhibition at which the genius of an Ude would have sunk in comparison,—whilst the battle array of hock-heimer, montilla, chambertin, and madeira seco gladdened the sight and heart of the Colonel. The keen air of the mountains had indeed sharpened the appetites of all; and the ladies, who were not of that spiritual caste to be fed with applause, did ample justice to the banquet. As for Mac, had he attempted to speak for the first two hours he would have been choked; for as

Dr. Sangrado of Valladolid had once advanced "that an empty stomach is pernicious to health," he interpreted the spirit of the learned doctor's advice so far as to hold that an empty *mouth* was equally fatal; and in this instance he certainly acted up to the letter, much on the principle of a boy's pop-gun, whose first charge sticks in the pipe till the next forces it out.

But Doña Pepita found time to eat and talk, drink and laugh.

"Por Dios, Coronello, the holy fathers of San Lorenzo would sooner entertain a whole procession of Capuchins, than supply you with a meal."

"Vi—va l—a P—p—p—pita," said, or rather stammered, MacMaw, intergulping a slice of a Perigord paté, and sending it down, in compliment, with an extra bumper of madeira seco.

"Now for a surprise from the Facciosos, to assist your digestion, Coronello!" said her companion.

"Vi—v—v—a la A—nt—nita!" rejoined

Mac, and down went a draught of immaculate montilla, bearing with it the parson's nose of a dinde-farcé.

The report of a gun at this moment assailed their ears : the masticatory machinery of Mac Maw was under respite.

“ Valgame Dios !” exclaimed Pasquale, running into the apartment, “ there is an affray with the piquet at the convent gates.”

The Colonel snatched his sabre, and swore like a trooper ; but the belt was entangled, and would not buckle on.

“ To arms !” he exclaimed, and drew back with the women to the farthest end of the room from the door.

Montreil rushed out, followed by Herbert. “ Keep back !” said he, as he turned short upon his secretary ; “ remain to protect the women—I must not be refused.” De Clifford reluctantly returned.

Pasquale accompanied his master, who had thrown his ample cloak around him. The inmates of the inn were too much concerned

for themselves to question or impede their movements.

Pasquale led the way. They passed under the low and gloomy arches that lead to the outer gates of the terrace of the Escurial; then, suddenly turning off by a small door, they found themselves on the steps that descend to the subterraneous passage of the convent:—darkness was around. A low whistle from Pasquale was shrilly but distinctly answered by another in the passage before them.

“ It is the guide,” said he to his master.

“ ‘Tis well,” whispered Montreil. “ Return, and tell Mr. De Clifford not to question my absence—to stop the tongue of the Colonel with the bottle!—and —”

At that moment the naked hand of a human being was laid upon his own.

“ Is it you?”

“ Chirto !” answered a strange voice, “ and follow.”

The subterraneous passage, which leads from

the town to the Escurial, has its common egress in the open air, and in front of one of the porticos of the church. It was excavated for the accommodation of visitors, as, in the winter months, the blast from the mountains which overshadow the building sweeps with so much force along the esplanade as to render its shock irresistible. Montreil groped in silence in the footsteps of his guide, and pursued the windings of the vaulted passage far beyond the opening generally known; for the guide had touched the spring of a hidden doorway, and Montreil was introduced, though unconsciously, into the cavern that was cut under the dry moat which surrounds the Convent.

"Chirto!" whispered the guide, as he suddenly stopped. "I hear voices."

Montreil held his breath.

"It was a groan of the Padre Anselmo," said the guide;—"his dungeon cell is to the right."

"A living being in the bowels of the earth?" shudderingly inquired Montreil.

"He is doing penance for having offended

the Prior. It is three years since. If he live three more, he may be liberated ; but that is impossible :—these dungeons constitute the capital atonements of the wayward monks. Do you perceive a light ?”

“ It is less gloomy,” said Montreil, “ yet I see nothing.”

“ Speak not ! we are near the catacombs, and the vaulted roofs may bear the voice to those who must not hear us.”

They proceeded in silence. Suddenly the width of the passage seemed to enlarge, and the guide took the hand of Montreil, who, in groping along, had now no line of wall to direct him, but waving his disengaged hand out as a protection, it came in contact with an object that seemed unsteady ; he extended it farther, and defined the outline of a human skeleton suspended from the arched roof. Montreil’s emotion was hid in night. The guide now stopped, and released Montreil’s hand, to ascend a flight of steps. After a pause, he raised with his back a heavy trap-door ; the effort seemed to need all his strength, but another’s assistance

soon relieved him of the weight, and he returned for Montreil.

In a few seconds they were within the precincts of those massive arches that connect the cells of the recluses with the church, and the guide and his companion now followed the steps of a monk. The surrounding gloom scarcely revealed the outline of the innumerable columns of the high altar ; and the enamelled catafalques of gold were hidden by the veil of darkness. After following a long sweep of corridor, they stopped at the refectory, where the monk provided himself with a lighted taper, and forbade the guide to follow ; then gliding on with noiseless footstep, and beckoning Montreil, he led the way through a labyrinth of cloisters, till they arrived at a grated door. It sprang open, and the light of the taper was reflected upon a flight of steps that lay below them, of variegated marble, polished as a mirror, and leading beneath an archway of the finest jasper. But the mind of Montreil was otherwise engrossed ; and the sumptuousness of that splendid descent was

lost upon an eye that was prying forward to fathom, if possible, the intricacies beyond it.

At the bottom of the steps another door was thrown open, and they entered the sepulchral vault of royalty, the costly splendor whereof leaves far behind the utmost stretch of the beholder's anticipation. Regal sarcophagi panelled the circular wall; and, ranged one above another, displayed a subterranean magnificence that mocked the dwellings of living kings. But the dazzling and exquisite sculpture, and ornaments of gold, that shrouded the dead, were lost upon the judgment of Montreil; and his gaze was riveted on the monk, who now proceeded to the marble altar, and touching a secret spring, a pilaster slowly moved back on hinges, and the voices of living beings saluted them in that abode of death. They entered a lighted cave, named the "Pudeitorio of the Escurial."

"El Caballero Montreil," said the monk, as he led him in.

"Viva, viva!" muttered some half dozen voices.

A group of men were standing, who, enveloped in the dark national capa, might have appeared to the uninitiated the black inhabitants of Avernus, in their own sinful abode. Others, bearing the hood and garb of the Jeronimite friars, were mixed among them. A large flambeau was fixed in the earth, and cast a red glare around. Towards the left, stood, upright, a magnificent coffin, bearing the insignia of royalty; it contained the body of Ferdinand VII. Through a crevice in the wall, an almost imperceptible spring of water was suffered to ooze in, and trickle over the body. It is thus that, during a space of twelve or fifteen years, the remains of royalty in Spain, entitled to the sanctuary of the *Panteon* of the Escorial, undergo the process of decay. The water falls, drop by drop, upon the scull, and, diffusing itself gradually over the body, wears away, in the course of time, the mortal dress of the skeleton, which at length becomes white and polished as ivory. It is then deposited for ever in the magnificent sarcophagus which, from the

moment of death, bears the title of its intended occupant.

Although the cell was ventilated, there was an oppressive closeness already impregnated by putrefaction; and the living, who were there assembled had muffled up their respiration. But when Montreil appeared, the momentous business which engaged them overcame the fastidiousness of their senses; and their sombre vesture was thrown back in order to shake the hand of their new companion.

“Amigo!” exclaimed one, whose hollow guttural voice at once proclaimed the Cura Merino, “few words, but many deeds. You know us, Caballero—all; and by the carcase of that defunct despot, who played his brother false, if I thought a traitor were among us, his hide were not *worth* two maravellis. But you are true and tried; and here are we met, all friends to Carlos Quinto—que viva!”

“The *puta* of Naples, who fathers on Castille her bastard child, must die!”

"The bantling also!" exclaimed the Padre Varca.

"Softly," interrupted Montreil. "Señores, I claim your earnest attention. Your loyal breasts, true to your legal lord, King Charles—(who, I trust, will soon guide safely through this revolutionary storm the kingly vessel of the state)—I say your loyal breasts should treasure up the hate that spurs you on, until the proper crisis; when you strike, then rush upon your prey as does the gathered snake, that coils itself but to spring the farther."

"Carr——o!" ejaculated Merino.

"Silenzio!" firmly but coolly rejoined Montreil. Merino's hand grasped the handle of his girdle knife; but the Chevalier's eye was upon him—it daunted even the sanguinary Merino. Montreil continued:—

"Señores, in my blood there is no fiery principle to turn my wrath from fixed resolve; but if cautious in determination, trust me I come armed to the proof. Your hot-brained friends without, who would rashly wake a foe, annul their aid by new-created mischief. The

dog that barks may have as sharp a fang, but the stealing hound bears off the prey! We must be prudent, Señores. That game will not last, which those who call themselves our friends are playing. What means the massacre at Chinchilla? You slaughter a squadron, and our foes are arming whole brigades to revenge them. The mighty chief whom I represent, and who holds your cause at heart, would not advise you thus . . . Up, up into the mountains lead your secret hosts,—proclaim not to the enemy your strength,—but in each conflict let your numbers fly when you have done the butchery. Leave *them* the *name* of victory—it is not worth the keeping. Be content to have the *substance*."

A murmur of applause ran round.

"Harass," continued Montreil—"assassinate—destroy—but seek not to conquer! Are there not fifty thousand Frenchmen on the frontier? One glorious victory to Don Carlos' cause would send the quaking Christinos for succour to the hated French, and call down those 'Gabachos' upon us. You plot the Queen's

assassination. Well? What if you dispatch her and her brats? You arm humanity against you, and your idol king will sit abhorred upon the throne. But where's the hand would strike the infant Isabel in her capital?"

"Mine, if there needed one," muttered the Cura. "But there are friends pledged to the deed. It shall be done."

"Who are the friends?" inquired Montreil.

"Rivero and Montalto," answered the Cura.

"Rivero and Montalto? Would you commit the execution of your high designs and noble projects to such reckless fanatics? What success can attend a cause committed to their desperate hands? Should they succeed, and plant their daggers in the body of the infant Queen, still there lives another!—the sister of young Isabel—to claim the throne. If Carlos of Bourbon must gain the crown through assassination, a holocaust of royal victims must bleed; for know, the proud Luisa-Carlotta has a claim—a heart to dare—and a head to wear the crown."

"Death to the hated tribe of Naples! to all!" vociferated Merino.

“ Well ! grant your auxiliaries succeed ! how will your cause stand the while ? What friend will it gain thereby ? What thousands will it not lose ? Heaven defend us, and your sovereign prince, from such coadjutors. I denounce—I abjure—I oppose a plot so replete with mischief and ruin.”

But whilst this secret assembly were thus plotting the murder of their enemies in the vaults of the Escorial, in the precincts of the court, and in the very centre of their foes,—matters of grave import to those concerned were enacting at the hotel. Colonel MacMaw, on the sudden alarm that had been raised previously to Montreil’s departure, had requested De Clifford to go in search of his orderly, having too great a regard for the service unnecessarily to expose a life so valuable as that of a Colonel in her Majesty’s service ; and when the trooper arrived, he gave orders for a disposition of troops in the hall of the inn, and, accompanied by two of the men—one preceding, and the other following him—he visited in person every apartment, and with loyal enthusiasm stuck his sabre into beds,

curtains, palliasses, &c., determined that no concealed rebel should escape his patriotic vengeance — though, unlike his great prototype, the redoubted champion of La Mancha, when he ripped up the entrails of the wine-skins, no liquid flowed from the wounds *he* inflicted, either in the shape of blood or wine.

After this exploit, and after barricading every inlet, the gallant defender of the rights of Christina returned to soothe the alarm of the ladies, whom he found instructing Herbert in the steps of a fandango, much to the surprise of the systematic field-officer, who felt, that as there was a time for eating, drinking, and dancing, so there was also a time for defending — and trembling.

MacMaw, however, suffered himself at length to be tranquillized with copious draughts of montilla, and ultimately acquired sufficient assurance of voice to intonate a lame strophe of his favourite melody, “Auld lang syne;” which having concluded, and not being saluted with a burst of applause, he puffed away the cloud raised from his cigarito, and was

enabled to see distinctly that the apartment was empty. A little chagrined and disconcerted at being alone, he boldly shouted for his orderly, Gomez.

Gomez stood before him.

"Is the guard on the 'qui vive,' Gomez?"

"Si."

"Gomez, here's wine, camerado," and Mac Maw filled his orderly a whole glass with his own hand—(it was not from the Colonel's own binn).

"Gomez, amigo!" continued his master, condescendingly, "you shall sleep in my room to-night.—I wish to rise early in the morning," added Mac, endeavouring to conceal his real motive for having company, "and you may as well station a sentinel at the door, lest *you* should oversleep yourself."

Gomez touched the brim of his cap, and the men bred to war's alarms retired to their apartment.

* The Colonel was no sooner hoisted into bed, than he was fast asleep; but ere his head sank upon the pillow, he carefully tucked what

Gomez facetiously termed his rosary beside him. Now, certainly, if fervour and devotion were peculiarly due to a rosary, that of Mac Maw must have possessed a most miraculous attraction ; for report says, that the Colonel was wont to lavish his kisses on it even in his sleep ; but he had no sooner fallen into his first snooze, than the profane hands of Gomez were upon it, and, raising it to his lips, the very essence of MacMaw's devotion bathed the sacrilegious throat of the trooper, and every drop—but just then the valiant Colonel snored, and Gomez, the unconscionable Gomez, was intimidated.

Most of the vocal sounds have been classified; but though a snore frequently proceeds from the vocal as well as the nasal organs, yet, owing to some unaccountable neglect, we are without authority to class or specify a snore—that loud interpreter of the ever-restless soul—that startling dragoman of dreams !

As we wish to transmit our fame to posterity, and soar above that illiterate crowd of novel-writers who are shackled by the laws of gram-

mars and lexicons, we do hereby proclaim the sonorous and expressive snore of Colonel Mac Maw as one of the nine parts of speech, commonly denominated an interjection, the orthography whereof may be thus transcribed:—

“Umphxxxahaaawxa!”

CHAPTER VII.

"A glowing Iris bending o'er the storm—
A swan emerging from the wave—as bright;
Her very step was eloquent—her form
Moved with the impulse of her soul's delight;
And native to that clime—exulting—warm—
Her young heart heaved,—gay, frolicsome, and light;
Loves nestled in her cheek, and through each vein
There flow'd the titled blood of noble Spain."

Sketches and Portraits—A Character.

THE Lady Vicentita de Olivares was seated on an Indian fauteuil of elegant and curious workmanship. A red Turkish scarf was thrown with studied negligence across her shoulders, and formed a beautiful contrast to her richly-embroidered white morning dress. Her feet crossed a morocco tambour; and although the female foot is noted in Spain for its diminutive-

ness, there was something in the delicate and exquisite formation of her ankle and instep that challenged even the admiration of an Andalusian. The dark full eye—the raven hair that flowed with the skill of the toilet around her shoulders, contrasted a skin of dazzling whiteness,—whilst her lip and cheek revealed, through their transparency, the warmth of youth and of feeling. Yet there was a touch of art—a cast of mannerism about her—which was, perhaps, owing to the nice arrangement and distribution of her lovely tresses, and the skin-like fit of her sandal over a chaussure of the light texture and open web of Barcelona silk. Dignity sat upon her brow, and self-possession on her lip, which ever and anon displayed the faultless symmetry of most beautiful teeth.

Such was the avowed and reigning belle of Madrid, whose charms were the theme of poets, the toast at banquets, and the despair of Castilian beaux. Married at thirteen to a grandee of Castille, her parents had bartered their child for title and wealth. She was the bride of one who, having wasted his constitution in the dissipation

of nearly half a century, takes to wife a young creature, whose heart cannot appreciate the sacrifice it makes ; or for vanity leads the yet unconscious victim to the altar, that the world may envy him the possession of so much beauty.

Five years of wedlock, however, appeared not to have awakened a dream of youthful passion, and her heart still slumbered. Endowed with mental acquirements above those generally ascribed to her countrywomen, to a thirst for knowledge was joined an exquisite taste for the arts. Well read, and possessed of acute perceptions, the tranquillity of her passions was, perhaps, the result of her refinement ; for the superiority, or at least level, of intellect in man can alone command the affections of an accomplished woman, and Vicentita had not listened to the ardent, but commonplace, protestations of her numerous admirers.

Her husband, in the early months of wedlock, watched her with the hundred eyes of jealousy and suspicion ; but he found his honour and her fidelity safe in youthful innocence ; and thus confiding, the infatuated spouse saw no danger

as her almost childish loveliness ripened into womanhood.

On the left of Vicentita was seated, with a little tabouret between them, a female past the bloom of life, plainly dressed in black. A mantilla hung from her comb, and curtained around her bust. Traces of beauty yet lingered in her faded cheek ; and though her eyes were sunk, there was a vivacity in them that cast a light of youth upon her wrinkled features.

“Enough, dear Alice, to-day we will curtail our English lesson ; besides,” added Vicentita, “you must know that I am one in advance.”

“Nay, Marquesa,” said Alice, “how can that possibly be ?”

“Believe me, Alice, I took a lesson last night at the tertulia of Elena. It was attended by two foreigners—Englishmen.”

“I have heard of them,” said Alice ; “one is said to be of quality, the other his companion—the Chevalier Montreil and——”

“Enrique De Clifford,” interrupted the Marquesa. “My husband has offered him the house, and I expect his visit this morning ; but

you tell me the English are reserved on first introduction ; perhaps he will defer it."

Alice cast a glance on Vicentita, and thought her toilet even more recherché than usual.

"I should think light of his gallantry, beautiful Marquesa, were he to delay."

"Or rather of my attractions," said Vicentita.

The page of the Marquesa de Olivares now entered the room, and announced the Father Rodrigo.

"Enchanting Marquesita !" said the oily-tongued friar, as he bowed, whilst a wanton leer was visible upon his would-be holy countenance.

The Marquesa appeared embarrassed ; not that she had any aversion to the holy friar, but she did not then expect him. He was one of the few who had free ingress to the Marquesa's house. The warmth of his address, the half-ventured declaration of passion, which would sometimes escape his lips, though never rebuked, were never encouraged. With admirable tact the Doña evaded their meaning ; yet

she suffered him to hope, for she did not dare openly to oppose : in fact, he held her in awe.

Don Rodrigo's was not an every-day face ; his olive-brown complexion, handsome features, and expressive eyes, were set off with the force of language in his lineaments. The counter-smile, the voluptuous glance, wandering upon beauty, proclaimed at once the inward man. Well assisted was the priest by the honeyed delivery of a practised tongue. Varying his speech according to its impression upon his hearers,—to seize the vacillating moment—to snatch the hesitating vow—such were the seductive powers of Rodrigo. The Jesuit garb he wore was of glossy blackness, and fell in ample and graceful folds around his manly person. The lace that fringed his collar, white as snow, suited well his comely countenance ; and the silken vesture which half concealed, half exposed the studied movements of his limbs, was equally free from extravagance and fashion, yet in costliness as well as neatness courted admiration.

But Vicentita, who acknowledged him to be

the accomplished attraction of her tertulias—who would then listen with delight to the sparkling brilliancy of his conversation—dreaded his pointed attentions and homage, when occasion left them tête-à-tête. She felt his influence over her mind ; but the impassioned tone of his address, at such times, alarmed her :—less impassioned, Don Rodrigo would have been more dangerous to the Marquesa.

As the Holy Father perceived Alice, he nodded with a look of protection.

“ *Alicita, hija!*” (daughter!) your application to our Holy Mother, the Church of Rome, has received the assent of the faithful. The day is appointed for your recantation. The ceremony will be public, in the church of Santo Ignazio.”

“ And the *Bishop?* — ” said Alice, interrogatively.

“ *Has* granted the pension ! ”

“ Thanks, holy father ! ” said Alice, as she rose to withdraw ; and when she left the apartment, the *fray* seated himself nearer to the Marquesa.

“ Poor Alice !” said she, “ this happy conversion from heresy will enrich her earthly, as well as heavenly, store ; but who has persuaded her to the change ? ”

“ The question is superfluous, Vicentita ! It can but be the work of the Father of Spirits, through me, his humble and unworthy creature !”—and the fray crossed himself devoutly as his features fell into that practised and rigid solemnity which became the subject.

“ May the light of the faithful thus fall with searching beam into the hearts of all heretics ! ” continued Rodrigo, as the door was again thrown open, and Herbert De Clifford appeared.

The saloons of the Fauxbourg St. Germain may boast the unrivalled attractions of fashion ; —the exclusives of St. James’s may exert *their* despotism, and draw *the line*, leaving the despairing rejected, without appeal, to envy the elect of Almack’s,—but the tertulias of Spain set a more amiable example of distinction, without having recourse to offensive or harsh measures. The innate reserve and delicacy of the Spaniard fit him by nature for

polished society. Never gross, dignified in manner, and cautious in expression, his movements are graceful and unrestrained. While his habits of life may even now be almost denominated *patriarchal*, a softened shade of chivalry blends with his character; and the champion of the lists, at the present day, as he bends his knee to majesty, vows that he unsheathes his sword in honour of his lady and of his king. *Gallantry* were too mild a term for his homage to the sex; it is devotion, exalted and enthusiastic. Thus he enters into the presence of his fair countrywomen, whose control gives to society the protecting influence of self-respect. A fanatic at the altar of his God, the Spaniard is an enthusiast at the shrine of beauty; and if he pours out his soul at the former, he offers his heart, with hardly less devotion, a sacrifice to the latter.

Seldom is a violator of the rights and laws of assemblies known in Spain. If there is one defect more severely reprobated than another, it is that of possessing a heart insensible to woman's charms. The deceiver may be forgiven, if he expiate

his perjury by devotion to another; but the cold—the heartless—are never tolerated. They appear in the light of atheists in passion, and their heresy is punished by general abhorrence. 'To look at the daughters of Spain, indeed, were to declare such a being an impossibility; yet are they still Nature's own, unassisted by art, enriched and portioned off with native beauty only.

Lest universality of loveliness should pall—lest, in its range, comparison should be wanting, and the eye, weary of one vast field of roses, should seek to repose upon the quiet shades of the retiring field flower—in Spain are some, as elsewhere, noted for the contrast—some, not *plain*, (the word is not orthodox,) but *almost* plain.

Amongst these, the Lady Elena V——, *la fea* (the ugly), as she styled herself, was distinguished. Who that has passed the Guadarrama—who that has strolled along the saloon walk of the Prado—who that has witnessed a bull-fight (*y Montes espada*)—who, in short, that has been at Madrid, knows not the hospitable, the accomplished Elena? Opulent, yet generous;

witty, yet amiable; highly talented, yet unassuming; deformed, yet graceful; plain, yet fascinating—who that has enjoyed her delightful tertulias will not cherish pleasurable reminiscences of their lively hostess!

There was an air of *sans gène* around her, which might be traced to her varied powers of conversation. With peculiar tact she caught the taste and talent of her visitors; and being generally versed in topics of science and art, her policy was to introduce the subject most familiar to her hearer, as that in which he could make the greatest display; and those who went forewarned of her personal deformity, came away impressed with the beauty of her mind and the graces of her conversation; so satisfied is mankind with those who leave us satisfied with ourselves.

Elena was verging upon that epoch of woman's life when she must bid farewell to the name of "young," still she could hardly be called an old maid. Lively, and, as it has been said, wealthy, pleasure was her idol. She worshipped it in the dance, the song, the arena,

and the course. A daring horsewoman, a musician, a painter, a poetess, and a lover of play—her private tertulias were composed of the wits, the dandies, the spendthrifts, the gamblers, the sportsmen, and the philosophers of the day; whilst her select and weekly parties were the resort of all the fashion of Madrid. Left an orphan in early life, she had loved, and had been deceived. But awaking from her dream of regrets, she renounced for ever the influence of man, and afterwards courted his society only on that principle of exchange of courtesies necessary to the formation of her soirées and other parties.

Not many porticos removed from that of the Teatro del Principe, is a threshold often crossed by the élite of the beau-monde of Madrid. Much would the fashionable of St. James's wonder if, alighting for the leading soirée of a European capital, he were led through an antiquated and filthy passage to the stairs of the mansion, and, groping his way up mosaic steps of broken flags, planks, and dilapidated brickwork to the second landing, needed yet

to search, in the clair-obscur of a solitary light glimmering through the dim bottle glass of a common lantern for the admission bell. Such was the entrance to the dwelling of Elena de V—.

In an antechamber, ranged like tapestry, stood the valets of the house, and of the guests. The latter a motley group, wearing the liveries of their masters—from the pampered menial of the grandee to the half-starved hireling of the estudiante; an ill-regulated array, addicted more than elsewhere to the half-awake lounging and lolling—the unprofitable propensity peculiar to their caste—“*il dolce far niente.*”

The withdrawing rooms, brilliantly illuminated, surrounding the saloon of reception, were appropriated to the gaming tables. Here were assembled the yearning and ever eager sons of chance. The massive doubloons, or ounces of gold, staked in heaps, changed owners, and worked their talismanic influence in the varied contortions of faces betraying success or despair.

Society, and synonymous is the Spanish term *tertulia*, holds out another and more amiable

attraction. Proud of requited love, the cheek of a Castilian woman reddens not at its avowal. “He will be there,” inwardly whispers the exulting belle, as she completes her successful toilet; whilst the happy and constant lover ever anticipates her presence. “She comes!” and the stolen glance, and mysterious language of the abanico (fan), that telegraph of her heart, like beacons to the watchful mariner, impart their silent and trusty solace to his breast.

No tertulia was perhaps so much frequented as Elena’s; yet no undue allurement was resorted to. The dissolving sponge-cake, and the limpid iced water, were the customary, the only refreshment; a piano the sole instrument for the quadrille de improviso. Of divers complexions were the numerous visitors. The inviolable formula of invitation once pronounced by the Señora de la Casa—“This house is yours”—implied a lasting welcome; and many availed themselves of their privilege to the letter. These, the mistress of the house would facetiously denominate her *fixtures*. Extravagant characters were not wanting in her assemblies, but let it be confessed they

were generally such as were imbued with foreign imitations. Of this number was the Marquis de C——, a mongrel Yankee, innoculated moreover with English and French dandyism. Of the native breed was the dwarfish Count V——, half crushed in the uniform of the horse grenadiers, whose beaver was called by the noble warrior's associates, his extinguisher. But the predominant number of Elena's guests were distinguished for beauty, accomplishments, or wit; and in the graceful and mazy evolutions of the cotillon-waltz, exhibiting the native elegance of Andalusian forms, would gain from every beholder an avowal of their unrivalled loveliness.

It was at one of Elena's tertulias that chance threw Herbert De Clifford more immediately into conversation with the Marquesa Vicentita de Olivares, who, probably rather from impulse than design, encouraged the opportunity of conversing with an Englishman. The lady was no stranger to the literature of that country, and possessed the love of display for which the sex, of the order of the *Blues*, are distinguished. Moreover, the prepossession which is generally felt

by cultivated foreigners in favour of the English, added to the interest; and De Clifford, who was divested of the forbidding hauteur and chill reserve which peculiarly belong to his compatriots, was imperceptibly led to display his own genuine and unaffected literary resources.

CHAPTER VIII.

"——— I'll follow, as they say, for reward.
He that rewards me, Heaven reward him."

FALSTAFF.

Royalty at Home—The Palace—Genuflections disastrous
—the Paté—Talleyrand and the Crown of Mexico.

DONA LUISA CARLOTA, the spouse of Don Francisco de Paula, was at this time at variance with her sister, the Queen-Regent. Though instrumental in the preservation of the throne of Isabel, by detecting the treachery of Calomarde,—on which occasion, carried away by the vivacity of her temper, she slapped that upstart minister's face,—yet it was an easy task

for Zea Bermudez to influence the judgment of the weak and vacillating Queen-Mother against her, by describing her sister's warm defence of the pretensions of Isabel as a veil to conceal her own ambitious views on the throne.

But the haughty and ambitious Carlota was silently gaining ground on the very steps of the Queen's minister, who was leading his royal mistress to dictate those anti-liberal decrees which tended so much to weaken her general influence. The politic and daring Carlota, whose lofty pride and unbounded love of dominion were now masked by the necessity of the times, and who stooped to conquer, was daily acquiring popularity, as well as Francisco, her spouse, who was now trotted about on every occasion, dressed up in smiles and affability.

Whether such ambitious views on the part of Carlota were real or not, her advice was the most wholesome that had been offered to Christina, and she may be said to have thereby

mainly established the government of the young Queen. But the firm and masculine tenor of her policy was weakened by subsequent proceedings of the voluptuous and indolent Queen-Regent ; and Carlota, who at first beheld with chagrin and dismay her inconsistent conduct, might contemplate without a qualm the possibility of her husband's usurpation of the throne.

Meanwhile, Christina, blind to her true interest, and indulging in luxurious ease, suffered those adherents whose lukewarmness needed but the breath of indifference to cool their attachment, to drop away from her cause. The Spanish nation had received her with enthusiasm ; but they soon discovered that under the prepossessing mask of beauty lay concealed the usual weaknesses of her sex, and that insatiable avarice and voluptuous indolence now ruled the ruler of Spain. Openly avowing her disgraceful intrigue, at the time the nation was

torn with civil war and devastated by contagion, she raised the low-born Muños to usurp the privileges and dignities of Castilian noblesse, and outraged public feeling by the introduction of her paramour into the very councils of the state,—all this too, within—

“ A little month, and ere those shoes were old
With which she followed—”

to the tomb her late husband and King.

There was another cause of disgust, in the favours lavished upon the daughter of a milliner, named Teresita. This woman had wormed herself into royal favour, and was raised from her original low calling to take precedence of the high-born *camarista mayor*. The pride of Castilian doñas could ill brook such preferment, and from that time the ladies of the court of Christina became decided Carlists. Thus the Queen-Regent, alone supported by the Liberals, had in fact no real partisans, since *they* only endured her as the lesser evil, compared with

the despotism of so uncompromising a ruler as Don Carlos ; and especially, when they remarked her reluctance to complete that emancipation of the country from the accumulated load of misrule and fanaticism which she had early led them to expect,—even these deserted her : and there were moments, very shortly after the demise of Ferdinand, when every one knows that the mere presence of him denominated the Pretender would have turned the scales, and Carlos Quinto would have mounted an undisputed throne. But she who thus trifled with her friends, was then Fortune's favourite. The hand of the assassin, the danger of conspiracy, were alike averted ; and, as she journeyed along the very verge of destruction, the capricious deity veiled the eyes of her *protégée* on the brink of the precipice. But if Christina was insensible to the perils around her, there was one who shared her prosperity and perceived her danger. The Infanta Doña Luisa Carlota watched with a

jealous eye the machinations of her enemies ; an hundred spies were feed, and ever on the alert. She learnt the arrival of Montreil at an epoch when travelling was interrupted throughout the kingdom, and she attached much meaning to his appearance at Madrid at a time when the very seat of government was evacuated by the timid, the idle, and the rich. No sooner did she ascertain that, although bearing a foreign rank, the Chevalier was an Englishman, than Mac Maw was ordered on duty at the Palace.

As she seemed unconsciously to lounge through the antechamber on the day the Colonel was in attendance with other officers of the court, without apparently perceiving him, the fan of the Princess slipped through her fingers, and fell precisely at the feet of Mac Maw.

The veteran Colonel was equipped in a uniform designed to shew off the symmetry and outline of a handsome man. The celador jacket of sky-blue relieved with pink descended no lower

than his elbows, leaving wholly to the trust of a pair of tight black small-clothes the projecting bow of a paunch which, disdainful of restraint, protruded so as to conceal from its master's view the colossal legs beneath. But Nature, all-provident Nature, in the harmony and equity of her favours, had bountifully endowed her pet with a counterbalancing weight, which added at least to the bulk, if not to the dignity, of his person. On this important duty at the Palace, the Colonel, aware of the necessity of preserving his perpendicular, was braced and belted accordingly. The fan of the Princess lay at his feet; his well-known gallantry could not admit of hesitation; Mac Maw sank upon one knee, and though unable to see it, was fortunate enough to find the object his hand sought. But to raise himself again had not occurred to him, and the effort caused a fearful rent ——

A half-muttered malediction on the tailor escaped the unlucky Mac, as he recovered his

feet; there was a smothered laugh from some, and the Infanta raised her handkerchief to her eyes; but she was not to be disconcerted in her important scheme, and, suppressing her smile—

“Coronello,” said she, “I rejoice to see you well!—What news?”

“Gracious Princess—much honoured,”—stammered Mac, his embarrassed countenance of the delicate hue of the beet-root.

“You have always news,—what bring you to-day?”

“Tidings of joy to your illustrious house; Rodil has made a capture.”

“Ha!—the Pretender?”

“Not yet, Serenissima; but he has overtaken his equipage, and got possession —”

“Of his children?” interrupted the Princess.

“No!—of his travelling trunks!”

“What authority have you for the report?”

"The very best, Royal Highness!—despatches received by the Chevalier Montreil."

"Chevalier who?" said she, with apparent listlessness.

"The English Chevalier Montreil!"

"Never heard the name! But we should like to know particulars. You must bring your friend to the Palace."

"When, illustrisima?"

"To-night, at the hour of seven!" And the Infanta moved on.

The spurs of the Colonel sent a martial echo to the very roof of Montreil's abode, as, with weighty and dignified step, he ascended the stairs. Men favoured with success are always inflated to their full dimensions : the heart expands, the head is elevated, the arms take a wider space for action, and the legs a longer and more pompous stride ; even the voice grows louder and stronger—the very soul fattens upon success ; whilst its absence produces an opposite

extreme,—the heart shrinks, the head droops, the tongue falters, and the unfortunate would hide himself from day.

“How are ye?—how are ye?” cried Mac Maw, the very room shaking beneath his weighty stride.

Montreil, who was penning a despatch, twisted his auburn moustache with impatience.

“Mac, I am really busy just now.”

“Don’t move — don’t move — nothing important — just come from the Palace — tell you another time—Addios!” said the Colonel, piqued at his indifference, and hinting enough to be coaxed back, though determined, even at the cost of obsequiousness, to deliver his message.

But Montreil, who read the soul of the shallow-pated MacMaw, felt no hesitation in stooping to allure him back. He readily conceived, from his self-importance, that he was for once the bearer of some weighty matter,

to sift which out of the rubbish of his brain required no great ability.

"My dear Mac," said Montreil, as the Colonel was fumbling with the door-latch, threatening to disappear, yet expecting to be recalled, "you remember we dine at six, Mac ! —the Angoulême patés have arrived in the ambassador's bag."

"Don't know how to manage—on duty at the Palace!" said MacMaw, laying an emphasis on the last word, the meaning of which Montreil understood. ▶

"D—— the palace," said Montreil ; "if you don't come to cut the paté, Mac, I'll cut you !"

"Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!" MacMaw felt new life, as he heard of the arrival of the paté. His under jaw fell, but instantly closed again, as if the truffles of Angoulême were already entrapped within his active masticators.

When Montreil invited him to dinner, he won his heart ; but when he announced the

arrival of the Périgord paté, the Colonel's very soul was his.

"How unfortunate," said MacMaw, as it occurred to him that the Chevalier was to attend at the Palace, "the Infanta Luisa Carlota has expressed a wish for your attendance to-night at the very hour of dinner."

"A thousand devils!" thundered Montreil.

"The paté! — what a pity!" sighed Mac Maw.

"May it choke you!" said Montreil. "Why did you not warn me at once of the Infanta's pleasure?"

"Nay; but——"

"Mark me!" said the Chevalier; "there is more meaning in this than you are suffered to know. Colonel," added he, "do you hope for the sash of a General?"

"It is my desert; but interest is against me."

"Yet wear it in your thought," said Montreil,

griping his arm, and speaking with a patronizing air ; “ but let it be a bandage to your eyes—let it stop your ears—close your lips—and if awhile you serve me in this intercourse at the Palace, the sash—do you hear me, Sir ?—the sash,” continued he, after a significant pause, whilst his glance pierced through the Colonel, “ shall be your reward !”

“ Ah ! pledge me that, and here I pledge fidelity and devotion to your interests.”

“ Enough ! If ever the half-witted Francisco should seek thee out, whatever that echo of his wife may say, bring me the purport, and before three months have passed over——”

“ The sash ?”

“ Is yours ! But if by word or sign you should betray—if but to boast connexion with the Palace——”

“ No sash !” said MacMaw, with marked dejection.

"A rope instead, to hang yourself; and now, begone! We meet at seven for the Palace. My conference over, we will make arrangements respecting——"

"The paté," said Mac, with fond emotion; and Montreil resumed his writing, whilst the Colonel tripped out of the room, feeling the belt of his sword, as if it were already turned to crimson silk.

At the western extremity of Madrid, on an eminence overlooking the windings of the Manzanares, is erected the splendid palace of their Most Catholic Majesties. It occupies the same spot where stood the ancient Alcazar, founded by the Moors, which was burnt in the reign of Henry the Second, rebuilt, and destroyed by an earthquake in the lifetime of Henry the Fourth, and once more rebuilt. Charles the Fifth converted it from a fortress into a palace; and his son, Philip the Second, completed the work, under the direction of Luis de la Vega.

His successors continued to embellish it. On Christmas night, 1734, it was again burnt to the ground. Philip the Fourth, the then reigning monarch, resolved to reconstruct it on a scale of grandeur that should surpass its former magnificence; and Philip Jubara, a native of Messina, and the first architect of the day, was entrusted with the noble task. Then commenced the elevation of that beautiful structure, which has since been acknowledged the most complete palace of Europe. "Vous êtes mieux logé que moi," said Napoleon, when he installed Joseph in the metropolis of his usurped dominions. Splendid without, and costly within, the eye, inebriated with its wealth, in vain seeks repose. Broad and massive sheets of mirrors, of unrivalled dimensions, reflect the gilded roofs, and throw an unending perspective around; whilst a thousand paintings of immortal fame fascinate and charm the untiring gaze of beholders.

The western wing of the building, communicating with the gorgeous Saloon of Ambassadors, was appropriated to the residence of the Infante Don Francisco and the Princess Luisa Carlota. Their private staircase was sentinelled by the “Alarbarderos” and a few gardes du corps, when MacMaw returned the guard’s salute, and ascended, followed by Montreil.

In the antechamber were some officers on duty, and a household valet, who stepped up to Montreil, and, motioning to the Colonel to remain, invited the Chevalier to follow.

In a small room adjoining the Prince’s apartments, he was met by the Infante himself, who laughingly welcomed him.

“ Le Chevalier Montreil, I believe ? My wife is desirous for the particulars of your despatches ; she is near us, and within hearing. Etiquette, you are aware, Chevalier, will not allow me to present you to her till you have been received at Court after the public mourning. But I

believe you have news from Castel-Branco ;—
is it true ?”

“ Doubt it not, Serene Highness ; I am well informed.”

“ You are an Englishman ?”

“ With a heart in your cause, Prince. I have served you before.”

“ How ? — how ?” said the surprised Francisco.

“ Are there no——” Montreil looked cautiously around, “ hearers ?”—added he.

“ None, but my wife, Chevalier.”

“ You aspired once, Highness, to the throne of Mexico ?”

“ Ha !” said a voice within.

“ Who speaks ?” said Montreil.

“ It is Luisa — my Carlota ; proceed with confidence.”

“ The Bourbons of France were your competitors.”

"Strange you should know that!—They were."

"The wily Talleyrand was in the plot."

"And marred it!" said the voice within.

"'Tis true!"

"Chevalier!" said Don Francisco, "what chance may yet remain?"

"A better far, my royal Prince!"

"Where?—how?"

Montreil drew nearer the Infante, and whispering, yet so that the subdued tone of his voice might reach the listener within—"The crown of Spain outweighs that of Mexico."

A long pause ensued, whilst Don Francisco squeezed the hand of Montreil.

"Enough! Chevalier, busy tongues and eyes are around. This private conference, if lengthened, may create suspicion. We must meet again. Farewell!"

CHAPTER IX.

"The Spanish maid is no coquette,
Nor joys to see a lover tremble ;
And if she love, or if she hate,
Alike she knows not to dissemble.
Her heart can ne'er be bought or sold ;
Howe'er it beats, it beats sincerely ;
And though it will not bend to gold,
'Twill love you long, and love you dearly."

Papillottes — Intercepted Love-letter — The Sisters—
An Evening Tertulia.

HER Excellency Doña Mariquita Soledad de Valmarino arose from siesta about the hour of five, and proceeded to her evening toilette. Having taken her seat before the toccador, the friseur made his punctual appearance ; and whilst he pursued his avocation in the scientific

distribution of the natural as well as false tresses that constituted the pyramid of hair then worn, she scanned the "Diario di Madrid," and muttered to herself as she read the leading paragraph to a real decreto :—

"Doña Isabel Segunda, by the grace of God, Queen of Castile, Leon, Aragon, the two Sicilies, Jerusalem, Navarre, Granada, Toledo, Valencia, Gallicia, Majorca, Seville, Sardinia, Cordova, Corsica, Murcia, Minorca, Jaen de las Algarves, Algisiras, Gibraltar, the Canary Islands, the East and West Indies, and of the islands and terra firma of the sea-ocean (*mar oceano*) ; Archduchess of Austria ; Duchess of Burgundy, of Brabant, and of Milan ; Countess of Apsburg, Flanders, Tyrol, and Barcelona ; Señora of Biscay and Molina ; and in her royal name, Maria Christina de Borbon, Queen Regent."

"Y p—— de Muñoz. Amen ;" chuckled Figarito.

“Indecente!”

But the tone in which the rebuke was conveyed was duly appreciated. The barberito had harped upon a string that was musical to the Doña's ear; and, nothing daunted, with that licence which exists in Spain alone, and levels all in the language of intercourse, began to hum a ballad of his own composition, the hobby of our Figarito being versification:—

“La Niña a la Cuña
La madre a refrescar;
Viva Carlos quinto
Que nos ha de governar!”

“What are you about, Figarito?” exclaimed the Doña, now evidently displeased; “you have placed that left curl a thought too much above the eyebrow!”

“Que quiere usted?

“Tis a rebel more plaguy
Than ever was curb'd by Zumalacarrégui.”

was the extempore ebullition of the rhyming friseur, as he adjusted the truant lock.

Figarito's sublimity was at length interrupted by the arrival of the femme de chambre, and he slipped away, humming a new couplet to the tune of

“La Niña a la Cuna,” &c.

The waiting-woman had scarcely drawn the lace through the last hole of her mistress's corset, when two young females entered the room, and approached the Toccador.

“Beso la mano de usted, Señora Madre.”

“Merced! — Juanita! — Muchachas!” exclaimed her Excellency, and she nodded the recognition of her daughters' presence.

There was a reserve in Doña Mariquita's manner towards her daughters that never encouraged any sentiment of affection on their part; or if such were for a moment indulged, it was instantly suppressed, as the Castilian Doña seemed only

to lend herself at times to parental tenderness and solicitude, whilst in reality she was wholly absorbed by affairs quite foreign to her domestic cares. The accustomed visit of her daughters became therefore a kind of duty that would only have been noticed by its omission ; and the two interesting creatures who now stood beside her, in all the wealth of youth and beauty, appeared nothing better than the material adornments of her chamber ; she had, indeed, no more real sympathy with them than with the elegant ornaments of her boudoir. Deeply engrossed by the plots that were then forming at Madrid in the interest of the Carlist faction, she aided that cause with all the acute and intense feelings of her sex—feelings that should lead, in the mild and delicate texture of a woman's mind, to excellence and highest virtue ; but, once drawn into the mazes of worldly policy and factious daring, wholly unsex the female heart. As there is but one step from the sublime to the ridicu-

lous—so, in woman, there is but one step from affection to passion, from love to hate, from self-esteem to self-abandonment ; and if infected with party-violence, the angelic features of the most lovely prove but a mask wherewith to conceal the wishes and designs of a fury.

“ Juanita !” said the Doña, addressing her eldest daughter, “ we must confer alone. Leave us awhile, Merced.”

Merced looked at her sister, and rather hurriedly (for the Doña’s look was imperative) left the room ; but there was a cast of anxiety spread over her youthful features, as she turned a parting glance on Juanita.

“ Daughter !” said the Doña, “ you will open the drawer of my escrutoire. There is a letter !” added she, with an emphasis on the last word.

Juanita did as she was directed. Amongst several papers one fixed her eye ; she caught it up; but dared not meet her mother’s look.

“ It is from Isidro—read it !”

The seal was already broken, though it was addressed to Juanita.

"Your voice fails you," coldly observed the Doña, sharply snatching away the letter: "I will read it." She proceeded, though without turning to look upon her daughter,— "So, Juanita ! a correspondence—a clandestine one—not intended for my perusal. And what does the daughter of Don Ruy Nepomuceno de Valmarino intend to reply? thus deserted by her lover!"

The mother now turned a scrutinizing glance on Juanita's face ; its pallor was in ghastly contrast with the dark blonde lace that curtained her neck ; but when the Doña hinted at her lover's perfidy, its hue instantly changed, the blood indignantly rushing back and diffusing itself fully over it.

"Will *my* daughter receive the addresses of a man who makes faction a plea for his faithlessness! — who thinks that the adherents of

Carlos, our lawful king, have strayed from the path of success, and that their connexion would be a drag-chain to the wheel of his fortune!"

"Madam!" essayed the poor girl, but conflicting feelings choked her utterance.

"Be not deceived," resumed her mother, "Isidro is unworthy of you! Dismiss him from your thoughts at once; but if my daughter *should* countenance the insidious and skulking addresses of a man who is ashamed of her quality, then will the wife of a Castilian hidalgo disown such a daughter."

Doña Mariquita had spoken with all the coolness of self-possession, and it was in adjusting the fold of a shawl upon her shoulder that she leisurely gave sentence of excommunication on her daughter's affection; and then deliberately, and without waiting for or expecting a reply, left the room.

Juanita remained awhile motionless; the con-

cluding words of her mother had fallen with a heavy weight upon her ear, and benumbed her senses with despair. Had the anathema from the Doña been uttered in the soothing tone of sympathy, it would have produced an attempt at resignation; but, as it was, it seemed cold, heartless, and uncompromising.

Her young and guileless heart had not traced in that letter the mean design attributed to it by her mother; and though at the first instant the supposition overwhelmed her, the next reinstated her Isidro in her heart, free from the charge of deception. And wherefore, why forsake her? Could party-spirit poison or stem the stream of genuine affection?

Juanita was lost in reverie; and to unravel the mystery that had created a doubt, would have required a power beyond the reach of mortal.

As she sank into a chair, her eyes were fixed upon the door, which had been closed after her

mother. Her breathing was suppressed, and her motionless form seemed as inanimate as those which the Egyptians took from the sepulchre to be mementoes of death among the living. There was little of native beauty left in the marble fixedness of her features:—her face was naturally of that cast which presents the ever-varying index of an active mind; but the laughing eye, the dimpled cheek, the playful smile, the intelligent expression of the whole, had in that agonizing moment vanished. Her hands, as they clenched the fatal letter, gave a religious character of resignation to her figure. She looked like a Magdalen, from the pencil of Murillo, gazing upon death.

Juanita did not notice the gentle footstep which approached, nor was it until Merced stood before her that she was conscious of not being alone.

“Juanita!” falteringly exclaimed Merced, as

she caught her sister in her arms. All the consciousness of existence and reality rushed back upon Juanita's mind, and Merced received on her bosom the flood of her sister's tears.

The gentle heart of Merced was ever alive to the grief of another, although without a sorrow of its own. The affliction of her sister called forth that heart's warmest feelings ; and as Juanita turned to her for relief, the countenance of Merced exhibited a counterpart to the agony depicted upon her own. Thus they stood for some minutes in close embrace, with one grief, with one soul.

“ Isidro, Isidro, no longer lives for me—he is gone for ever.”

“ Compose yourself, Juanita.”

“ Yes, yes—for the grave !”

“ Juanita,” repeated the other in a serious voice, “ this sorrow is sin !”

“ Merced ! you have never loved !” Merced drew back. “ Sister !”

" Nay—nay, child, there should be another name for such pure love as thine. This—this which I feel for Isidro is my curse ; a parent's malediction rests upon it ; but thine, which I ardently return, is bedewed with Heaven's blessing."

Her Excellency Doña Mariquita had taken the seat of state of her tertulia, and was early surrounded by the old guests, the Father Rodrigo, the fiscal Don Ramon Gonzales, and the ex-superintendent of police, Senor Anjones, who were soon eagerly pouring into her ear all the abuse of the Queen Regent which they had that day gathered from their partisans.

" Viva Dios !" exclaimed Anjones, " to what shall we be reduced ? Here is a degeneracy in royalty ! The gardens of the Pardo and Aranguez supply the markets of Madrid with cabbages ; and Christina is a greengrocer, trafficking in artichokes and cauliflowers. Ye spirits of departed majesty, protect us !"

"Just like her. I remember the time," added the Doña, "when the surplus of the royal gardens and orchards were sent to the favourites of court, instead of being basely sold. In those days my table was decked with the choice fruit of San Ildefonso, and it never cost me a maravedi."

"They have turned the beautiful lawns of La Granja into a potato ground," sighed the Fiscal.

"Pitiful," said the Doña ; "abominable."

The set was now joined by his Excellency, the husband of Dona Mariquita.

"Caballeros! amigos!" said the old but hearty hidalgo, Don Nepomuceno.

The Jesuit, the Fiscal, and the Ex-superintendent, returned the greeting.

"News, news!" said Nepomuceno.

"From the king, our blessed Carlos?"

"No, friends, no; it is nearer home!—Solaro—the marquis—our noble colleague, is arrested."

"Maldicion!" uttered the Jesuit.

"The wretches! have they dared to lay hands on his venerable person? But there is an avenger at hand: the lives of the dastards shall pay for the insult." The face of the Doña glowed with indignation, as she continued, "Cheer up, friends! in three months I wager that our royal Carlos will enter Madrid. Have not the Christinos been defeated at Guernica?"

"Amigo, querido Isidro," said Don Nepomuceno, as he grasped the hand of a young officer who was announced as Conde de Nuñez.

The new-comer bowed respectfully to the Doña, who merely answered with a movement of the head.

The arrival of more guests drew the attention of the party. Doña Vicentita Marquesa de Olivares was announced.

Although the daughter of Doña Mariquita, there was so much formality in their meeting,

that a stranger would not have suspected the relationship.

"El Caballero Don Herbert de Clifford," said the Marquesa, turning to him; and then moving nearer to her mother—"The Caballero is an Englishman; he will need no other recommendation to your tertulias."

The Doña's glance had already surveyed the stranger, and the smile of approbation that ensued sealed his welcome.

The usual "Esta casa es al servizio de usted" was pronounced, and the Doña pointing with her fan to a chair, De Clifford seated himself beside her.

Doña Vicentita made a similar sign to the Conde de Nunez, who drew near to her.

"Isidro," said she familiarly, ere she observed the deadly paleness of his features, "I remit to your care my protégé Don Herbert de Clifford. Present him to the Duquesa de B—. But what ails you? So pale! Are you ill? But the girls will

be here directly, when I hope to see you more conversational."

"Pardon me, madam," he was going to reply, when the door of the saloon was thrown open, and the two sisters made their appearance.

The mourning for the late king had spread a gloomy veil over the beauty of Madrid, and the mantillas were all of an inky hue. To see one costume was to see that of every belle of the capital ; so that those who were still conspicuous for personal charms, could not be said to be indebted to the reigning fashion.

Thus the daughters of Don Nepomuceno were endowed with a native treasure of beauty, which made them independent of the prevailing mode ; or, whenever its caprice was adopted, reflected upon it additional attraction. The light of Vicentita's eye laughed through the clustering folds of the darkest mantilla ;—the gentler and more sylphid form of Juanita, as she moved

gracefully and silently along, seemed to steal away the breath of the beholders, who withheld even applause, lest it should fall as a burthen upon one so delicate ; whilst Merced, who combined similar personal charms with a degree of judgment beyond her youthful years, appeared to wear upon her polished brow that calmness which is the certain indication of a healthy mind.

Juanita had summoned resolution to meet her lover for the last time ; but when she encountered his eye, that followed her every movement, she leaned heavily on the arm of Merced, who led her faltering steps to a seat.

The parade of compliments having passed between the ladies and De Clifford on his introduction, Vicentita engaged him in conversation with all the powers of her elegant and highly cultivated mind. The Doña, her mother, was soon afterwards grouped apart with the Jesuit,

the fiscal, and her husband, forming a whispering coterie of treasonable politicians ; and subsequently Don Jayme, her eldest son, made his appearance. He was dressed in the regimentals of the “Garde du Corps,” and was considered the very pink of the military dandies of Madrid. The personal attractions which he possessed in no common degree were rated, by himself, at their highest value ; for, as the favourite of his mother, he had been taught fully to appreciate those gifts of nature. Educated by the Jesuits, under the special care of his mother’s confessor, that artful priest had poisoned his youthful heart with flattery, in order to ingratiate himself more deeply into the favour of a doting parent, and to lay the foundation of future dominion and control over the members of the family. Like most of the youths of Spain, Don Jayme had an education of that order which affords no intellectual resources ; but, by constantly administering to the grace and elegance of the exterior, induces

a degree of effeminacy and voluptuousness, which, when cloyed with satiety, degenerates into vice.

Although wearing the livery of the Garde du Corps, he was, like the major part of his comrades, a Carlist at heart; and appeased his conscience (like the rest of those who secretly forswore their allegiance to the Queen) by turning the accusation of treason on his opponents—regarding his oath as a mere matter of necessity, from the consequence of which many a ghostly confessor of Spain had, before Heaven, absolved him and his associates.

Don Jayme sauntered up the room, twirling his perfumed black moustache. Self-satisfaction sparkled in his countenance, and a smile and token of recognition were complaisantly exchanged with all except Isidro, whom he passed without noticing. Ultimately, he joined the political coterie.

The Conde de Nuñez approached Juanita

almost with diffidence. Neither spake ; but there was an overwhelming eloquence in that silent sadness which Merced hastened to interrupt.

“Are you in voice, Isidro ?”

“Pardon me to-night ; but Juanita will perhaps accompany you.”

“You must excuse my sister ; but I will play you a cavatina. Remain by Juanita.”

The fan of Doña Mariquita fluttered with vehemence, as, (through its lace folds,) although seemingly engrossed by the conversation of her clique, she scanned the proceedings of her daughter and the Conde. Observing him slip a billet into her hand, she suddenly rose, and walked up with stateliness to the lovers.

“You have received a letter,” said she to her daughter ; “you will give it me.”

With a trembling hand the note was drawn from Juanita’s bosom.

“It is my daughter’s reply,” said the proud

Doña, as she returned Isidro his own billet, and then leisurely returned to the circle of her friends.

Merced had struck the first notes on her piano, but no song escaped her ; she returned to Juanita's side, who falteringly said, "Your arm, Merced !"

Isidro was immovable ; the sisters had vanished from the saloon before he could recall his senses from their desolation. With a full heart, he made the Doña his bow, and gained the threshold he had been accustomed to pass from infancy, but which was now pressed by his foot for the last time.

CHAPTER X.

" When guilt is in its blush of infancy,
It trembles in a tenderness of shame ;
And the first eye that pierces through the veil
That hides the secret, brings it to the face."

The Museo—Amateurs for once Connoisseurs—A Rendezvous no Assignment—The Veil not always a Disguise.

THE morning succeeding the tertulia at the Carlist hidalgo's found Herbert pacing, at an earlier hour than usual, the Paseo de las Delicias, leading to the saloon walk of the Prado. The loungers were few, and, not being diverted by flitting objects, De Clifford had

now an opportunity of dwelling uninterruptedly upon the beauties of that enchanting scene. The magnificence of the vista,—the majestic grandeur of the lofty trees,—the chaste and beautiful sculpture of the fountains, playing in the golden sun-beams, — have, perhaps, together, elicited from the proud Madrileños the apostrophe of, “*Donde esta Madrid calle el mundo.*”

Heedless of all, however, the steps of De Clifford intuitively bent from the noble avenue towards the Museo del Prado. This national temple, appropriately seated in the most brilliant spot of the metropolis, presents a triumphant specimen of architecture, worthy of the gems within.

The works of Raffael, Guido, and Titian, in proud array, form the immortal tapestry of the centre gallery — a generous acknowledgment of superiority ceded by the countrymen of Murillo to the great masters of Italy, who thus possess the *salle d'honneur*.

In a distant and comparatively retired apartment is suspended that chef-d'œuvre of truth and simplicity, "the Nativity." Poets have essayed to portray a God ; the ethereal conceptions of the giant masters of the pictorial art have been devoted also to that task. The eye of modern painter or poet never dwelt upon the living image of the Deity ; in each it was a dream—the soul communing with immortality. Murillo has stamped the vision for the worship of his fellow-men.

A group of persons were standing in mute contemplation as De Clifford passed on. Raising his eyes to the object of their attention, he became himself transfixed to the spot. His fellow-admirers constituted a motley assemblage. One was in tattered garments, and with shoeless feet : the majority, indeed, were of the lower class ; but a reverential awe was spread on every countenance. Whatever instruction might or might not have done for them, no index was needed. They gazed on the *Conception* :—

“Ces traits de feu
Qui des yeux passent à l'ame,
De l'ame aux sens.”

“Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of prayer,” says the penitent.

“Ave Maria! 'tis the hour of love,” said the divine Murillo, and he drew the image of the passion of his God.

Breathless with delight, Herbert for awhile contemplated the canvas. There was a manifest devotion in that silent inspection, made simultaneously by a number of men, all offering their inward homage to the relic of a brother mortal's genius. Whether or not De Clifford's previous reflections had centred in the same subject,—now, as he gazed upon that gem of art, the image of Merced deValmarino presented itself more vividly to his imagination. Did the features really represent his fair friend, or did his personality trace the likeness? Perhaps neither was the case, but it was solely the ineffable sweetness, the

outward garment of an angelic soul, spread upon the Madoña, that reminded him of the beautiful daughter of the hidalgo. Be this as it may, his reverie might have been long protracted, but for the soft, half-whispered utterance of his name. This recalled him to self-possession, and, turning hastily round, he perceived the elegant form of a female dressed in black, and closely veiled by a deep mantilla. It was Vicentita de Olivares.

Was it an assignation ? We must leave the reader to interpret this delicate point to his own satisfaction. Vicentita, at the previous tertulia, had signified to Herbert that she should visit the Museo that morning ; and Herbert was now attempting some apology for being quite engrossed with the productions of art.

“ I could forgive you,” said his friend, “ for even *loving* that image of your admiration ; your taste would not have been elsewhere so indisputable. Alas ! these are the heir-looms of the

grandeur of my poor native land. Saved from the Vandal grasp of the French, they are, perhaps, only reserved for the destructive hand of my own countrymen ; for, receding as we do every day to barbarism, who shall say where the atrocities committed in civil war may meet their bounds?"

" You do your compatriots injustice," rejoined De Clifford. " However degraded the government may become, master-minds will ever be found to meet the emergencies of calamitous times. They are the progeny of conflicting elements, and often constitute a very panacea in periods of discord."

The gallery—Velasquez—Murillo—all were forgotten, as the intent pair mechanically made their exit from the Museo. They encountered few idlers in the Prado at that early hour, as they passed on to the royal gardens of the Buen Retiro ; nor did Vicentita linger to make a survey of the more frequented walks. Her

costume was of an order to evade instant recognition ; whilst her mantilla, drawn in closer folds, would have baffled any inquisitive observer. If she had swerved from strict propriety in assigning a rendezvous, it was not at the cost of any unusual pretext for her solitary walk from home. La misa (mass), confession, &c. are always unquestioned motives, and too readily anticipate and facilitate a Spanish woman's erring inclinations. "Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute," says the adage ; and the customs of Vicentita's country administer a ready licence to what she may at first only consider innocent intentions.

Formerly the royal gardens of the Buen Retiro boasted of those attractions generally encircling a kingly residence. The voluptuous Ferdinand the Sixth had lavished millions on the embellishment of this once sumptuous retreat ; but the ravages of war, during the Invasion, were here severely felt. The French

availed themselves of the commanding position of this spot for entrenchment ; whilst the site of the celebrated porcelain manufactory is pointed to with the ever-accompanying curse of the Madrileños upon their English allies, who, either from jealousy or for convenience for military operations, burnt it to the ground.

But these ruins, as well as the remaining beauties, were passed unheeded by the elegant Marquesa and her companion, as their walk led them on to the estanque or reservoir of the Retiro. Looking peculiarly beautiful in the national mantilla, (which was now permitted to fall aside and display her countenance,) Vicentina, secure of conquest, felt all the elasticity of youth, as she regained her confidence, owing to the solitude around ; and, had it not been for the pre-occupation of Herbert, sincere homage and adoration would, perhaps, have been the requital of so disinterested a preference.

But a spell was upon De Clifford. The eagerness with which he had courted that interview had for its object to draw the Marquesa's discourse upon one, whom to *see* was to *love*; and Vicentita little dreamt, as she passed encomiums upon her own sister, the lovely Merced, that she was fortifying that prepossession which, almost unconsciously, she was aiming to fix exclusively on herself.

Ignorant of the extent of her miscalculation, she had not observed a party in one of the paths of the Retiro who had spied her proceedings. The Jesuit Don Rodrigo had, in fact, recognised her. She might herself, at the distance, have escaped his penetration; but her companion had arrested his curiosity, and the clue was too direct to be erroneous.

At once the Jesuit, as he surveyed the unconscious pair, measured their proceedings by his own suspicions. His first impulse was to dis-

cover himself ; but a moment's reflection opened to him a depth of resources wherefrom he might draw means of revenge ample as the hate he now conceived.

CHAPTER XI.

Mézclanse lijeras luego
formando mimica danza
en concertado desorden
de figuras ensayadas.

Los cascós y coseteles
de la indómita Cantabria
de los fieles Castellanos
las dobles cueras y calzas :

Las fulgentes armaduras
de los infanzones gala,
del lijero Valenciano
los zaragüelles y mantas :

De chistosos Andaluces
los sombrerones y capas,
y las chupas con hombreras
y con cascaveles de plata :

Los turbantes granadinos
jubas, albornoces, fajas ;
los terciopelos y sedas
de vestes Napolitanas.

SAVEDRA.

A Masked Ball—The Fortune-teller—

Qui-pro-quo.

ONE dark cold night during the carnival of the year one thousand eight hundred and thirty-four, a detachment of the “ Escuadron Ligero” of the heroic city of Madrid took the direction

from their barracks in the "Plazuela de Cebada" to the "Casas Nuevas de Santa Catalina;" and at ten o'clock precisely they assumed their station at the entrance of a coffee-house, dismounted and lit their cigarillos, as the importance of their duties on this occasion allowed them double pay, and permitted the indulgence.

The night was bitterly cold ; the blast swept up the Calle del Prado with searching severity. From the low windows of the coffee-room of Santa Catalina streamed the only light around, and no exterior sumptuousness indicated the festive scene that was about to commence within. The ball-room was yet unoccupied, but already magnificently lighted up ; the vast extent of floor was richly carpeted, two rows of pillars supported the immense and gilded roof, and the walls were covered with enormous plates of glass. At one end the elevated orchestra was fronted by an extensive high screen, richly ornamented with crimson cloth

and gold, and surmounted by a revolving gilded figure of Mercury, bearing in his hand the names and order of the dances that were to ensue.

Slowly, and in small groups, the earlier votaries of pleasure appeared ; at eleven the dancing began, and by midnight the mass of the gay assembly impeded the movements of the earnest and untiring followers of the twinkling-footed Terpsichore.

Mark that manolla mask—she has assumed the common garb of the populace, but her mantilla is of the richest Valencian lace ; the pearls on her brow would be a dowry. But what avails the luxury of her costume ? It was displayed to meet the eye of one, and one only—and he is not here !—her mask conceals her disappointment. Speak to her, and she answers in the verbiage of mummary, whilst she sighs, “ He is not here !”

Leaning upon the arm of the Marquis de

Olivares, a slight female form, carefully disguised in the subtle domino, now made her appearance. The Marquis, who piqued himself upon a strict observance of decorum on all occasions, scorned to commit himself by any concealment of his own personal attractions, and the grave phiz of the grandee was instantly recognised by the anxious acquaintance of his beautiful lady, who shrewdly conjectured that the envious disguise of his companion shrouded his better half, and to relieve him of his fair charge was immediately the foremost of their projects. Alive to their manœuvres, she availed herself of the signal of the orchestra for a mazourka, to slip from the arm of her legitimate chaperon, and join the dancers. But what was the dismay of her elected partner to discover that, during a moment of abstraction, she had disappeared?—long he sought her, but in vain. In a withdrawing-room, where a luxurious toccador courted the footsteps of the co-

quette, the domino dropped from the truant mask, and revealed, in a full-length mirror, the beautiful form of Vicentita de Olivares, arrayed in the fanciful costume of an Andalusian gitana. Quickly adjusting her disguise, she again joined the mazy throng.

“Lost bird of the deluge,” said the brilliant gitana, or gipsy mask, as she accosted a being whose extravagant vesture and beard had rendered disguise a burlesque, (a free-born Yankee, who, in aping every fashion, had extracted only the ridiculous of them all, and was himself a caricature,) “hast thou wandered from the banks of the Mississippi?”

Our North American, so accosted, awaked from his habitual apathy, surprised at the question being put in his own language.

“Dost thou know me, pretty mask?” said the apathetic stranger, as his features almost thawed into a smile.

“Know thee! Art thou not the cosmopolite

somnambulist?—have we not met at——But I forget: being a sleepwalker, you do not see folk till you stumble over them."

That gitana was one whose appearance bade you look again. Though her features were studiously concealed by a close black satin mask, the flash of her dark full eyes shone upon you with sparkling brilliancy, and the row of ivory laughingly displayed through the hanging lace of her mask fixed your enraptured gaze. Over a dress of white satin hung the fantastic shreds of the garb she had adopted, but the most searching eye would have pried in vain for the tinsel of finery. Where spangled gewgaws would have ornamented the festal vesture of an Andalusian gipsy, rows of valuable pearls were strung in profusion, and a fortune in diamonds seemed carelessly entwined with the long dark tresses of her hair. She moved forward like a passing meteor of heaven, whose resplendent progress throws minor orbs into comparative shade;

whilst the gathering and fascinated throng surrounded and involuntarily followed her footsteps. The diplomati and literati were around her ; she romanced with one, coqueted with another, was scientific with a third.

“ By that footstep I know her,” exclaimed San Carlos. “ ’Tis Soledad.”

“ Pshaw !” ejaculated Santiago, “ the flash of that gipsy’s eye would reduce such a dry stick as Soledad to ashes; rather say it is la Concia.”

“ That’s impossible ! Van N——s is leading her, poor thing ! around, without a chance of escape. Besides, if she do escape the devil, there is his imp behind her.”

“ By the saints and martyrs,” said Roxa,—“ I have it !—Garcia, ’tis your wife !”

However, the more they conjectured, the farther they strayed from the truth ; and if titles or names confer wealth, the gipsy mask was opulent indeed.

The crowd was now immense—a sea of life undulating, and filling every crevice, like a current of agitated waters.

" Motley groups of harlequins and clowns,
 Fantastic heroes of the masquerade,
 From Folly's cap to Sapience in long gowns,
 A gay procession moved the droll parade,
 In every dress of Spain's provincial towns—
 The Catalonian, the Aragonese,
 The Andalusian, and the Navarese.

" A Pluto stroll'd along with Columbine,
 Apollo led three fish-fags, and the Graces
 Were dress'd in Nankeen trousers ; Proserpine
 Took ice with Vulcan, just to cool their faces,
 While Bacchus ordered some Montilla wine,
 Then waltz'd away with Venus a few paces ;
 Mars battled with a lobster, and the Devil
 Made love to Juno, and was mighty civil.

" Another's coat was a new periodical ;
 He was the stalking oracle of mimes ;
 His inexpressibles were from the Chronicle,
 Patch'd with the Post, and seated with the Times ;
 His vest was emblematic and ironical,
 The estatuto trimm'd with *Rosa's rhymes* ;
 His cap was the last sheet of the Gazette,
 Fix'd with a protocol for an egrette."

A garland of lovely forms surrounded the elegant V—s, who was already distinguished from the corps diplomatique, though but lately arrived at Madrid. The Countess de Teba, the daughter of R—y—l, the Duchess de R—, spread around the modern Paris a bewitching net of fascinating charms.

Arrayed in the Valenciana dress, her brow and features partly revealed through a mask of Barcelona lace, the Duchess de R— was there to conquer, not disguise. Her sylph-like form, as it partly reclined on V—s' arm, seemed to be borne along by the current of the crowd, and to yield as the graceful lily does to the running stream.

“ You are the only endurable Englishman I have known,” said the Duchess.

“ It is rather an expensive compliment to my countrymen.”

“ No compliment to yourself, V— ; for an Englishman's outward polish is at the expense

of more essential merit. If there is more refinement about you than your countrymen generally possess, there is also more hypocrisy!"

" You are severe, Duchess ; do you doubt my constancy ?"

" Not till I see my rival," said the lady.

" V——s is in love," whispered a low voice ; it was the gitana.

" Thanks, gitana ! Heard you not, charming Duquesa, the testimony of an angel in my favour?"

" But I do not mean with you, Duquesa," slyly added the gitana. " Yet will I not betray thee, V——s. Do I look like a traitor ?"

" Rather so," said the mortified Duquesa, " particularly in a black mask. Adios V——s," continued she, " you may wish to join the conspiracy ;" saying which, she caught the arm of a little fat man, who seemed to devour her movements.

" Tell me," said V——s, as he moved on

with the gitana, "who—where is the object I adore?"

The gitana caught his hand, and, leading him to one of the full-length mirrors at the end of the saloon, said—

"There is the object of your affection, V——s."

"The bewitching gitana?"

"No,—yourself! Whom do you love so well? and, next to yourself, the Duquesa, of course," pursued she, archly, as she carelessly lifted her mask, and quickly replaced it.

V——s stood entranced at that glimpse of beauty.

There was a tall figure leaning against one of the columns opposite to the principal entrance of the saloon, with his eyes intently fixed upon the door; he saw nothing, heard nothing, of the merriment around him; all his senses seemed to have been gathered into one focus of expectation. Many were the witticisms and jokes that were addressed to him by the crowd of masks around.

His immense height, like a sign-post, was a guide to many, whilst the bulky dimensions of his person, projecting right and left from the column he was leaning against, suggested the outline of a Moorish-twisted pillar.

"The Caballero is surely on horseback," said a dwarf, whose nose, as he stood on tiptoe, came on a level with a brass button of the gigantic mask's inexpressibles.

"He is a pillar of the establishment," said another, "a main prop of the house of Santa Catalina."

"A scarecrow, to keep away despoilers from the rich harvest of beauty around him."

"How canst thou say so, pigmy? Is he not rather a second Colossus, who only wants a lantern on his head to light us puny mortals, lest we stumble."

"True; then for once we should see his head enlightened."

But the patient individual, who drew upon

him unanswered the commonplace jargon of a masquerade, was fated to a severer trial; for a wag, who had recognised him, pinned to his back a paper, and, as fast as eyes could read and tongues repeat, he was accosted by the designation upon the label—

“ Mac, how are ye ?”

“ Why, very well, thank ye,” said he, wheeling about; and it was not till he had turned round and round, and boo’d and boo’d, until the perspiration ran down his cheeks, that he discovered the freak.

Just then Montreil entered, leaning on the arm of De Clifford. The colossal domino, who had been pirouetting to the tune of “ How are ye ?” hurried up to them.

Montreil—the artificial Montreil—enjoyed for once a natural burst of laughter, as he instantly recognised his bottle-chum, MacMaw; but the face of the Colonel was as immoveable as the mask which disguised it.

"We must confer alone," said Mac, and Montreil let go Herbert's arm.

"Royalty will be here to-night," whispered MacMaw. "I was designedly told to warn you — the Infanta Carlota ! Mark ! a white satin domino lined with pink ; Francisco is her escort. Be alert !" and the anxious and aspiring Chevalier took his station near the doorway.

"Herbert !" said one in the Andalusian dress of a *maja*, "shall I tell thee thy fortune ?"

"It would be a peculiar cleverness : much of my past life I am myself ignorant of ; no one may presume to unravel my future !"

"Be not too sure of that," and she whispered in his ear.

The youthful glow of health and mirth deserted his cheek, and emotion withheld his utterance.

"Be not alarmed—I will not injure thee," added the Andalusian.

"Mysterious being ! how didst thou obtain such knowledge ?—in mercy tell me !"

“ ‘Tis but myself who know it here ! But be cautious ; presume not to discover what I say, or it shall cost thee, Herbert de Clifford—notoriety !”

“ Thou knowest ! O tell me——”

“ No more to-night ; but I pledge thee my word thou shalt know more from me at a fitter time.” And the mask moved on.

“ Me conozes ?” said the prophetess, as she drew near to Montreil.

The haughty Chevalier did not deign to reply. Already the visionary glory of a royal rendezvous danced before his bewildered eyes ; but this dignity existed as yet solely in imagination, and the undaunted prophetess renewed her inquiry.

“ Hence with trifling gossip,” said the ruffled Chevalier, “ nor disturb thoughts of moment to a nation.”

“ Faithful and worthy agent of the King of the Barricades, the labouring mountain may bring forth as heretofore.”

A sudden flush mantled on the ashy cheek of Montreil. Had the stranger penetrated the disguise of the Englishman? Policy, however, induced him to conceal his ire.

"Prophetess, for once thy craft misleads thee."

"It may not be as lucrative as thine; but trust me, proud castle-builder, it is more sure. Ha! ha! ha! the web of mystery that shrouds thee would vanish with my breath; but other considerations render thee secure. The halo of another's virtues are thy best safeguard. Herbert De Clifford," added she, in an under-tone, "is thy surety."

Montreil turned to vent his indignation on his tormentor. The mask had disappeared.

But there was another eye upon him. A little black domino had narrowly watched his proceedings. He was closely masked; of small import to him was the surrounding merriment; he neither sought to intrigue, nor to lay himself

open to the inquiries of others ; ever and anon, another similarly disguised approached and whispered in his ear. Of moment to Montreil's life was this surveillance ; but as yet the fortunate star of the Chevalier predominated, and ere the fulfilment of the royal assignation, which, if revealed to that penetrating glance fixed upon him, might have been fatal to the scheming politician, a facetious wag surreptitiously raised a report that the Cura Merino was there in disguise. The sceptics received it as a joke, the timid heard it with dismay. "El Cura Merino !" was ejaculated with horror by the trembling lips of beauty. "El Cura Merino !" resounded through the vast saloon. The warning cry reached the ear of the black domino, who was watching the proceedings of Montreil ; suddenly he started, and, drawing closer the folds of his mantle, threaded with precipitancy the mazy groups around him, reached the door of the vestibule, glided past the throng of attendants, gained the

threshold, and disappeared in the midnight gloom.

For some time this sinister rumour answered its intended end, paralyzing the timid, and causing some astonishment in the minds of the sagacious; but, like most masquerading jokes, it was lost in a succession of follies; fresh ones were found to supply its place; and whether he were really amongst them or not, seemed in a short time to be matter of perfect indifference to the assemblage.

But for a while let us leave the gay and festive scene; and, peering over the "heroic city," like Asmodeus of old, give our reader some insight into the palaces of majesty.

It was the hour of eleven that very night; Luisa Carlota had glanced into one of those immense mirrors which decorate the walls of the royal saloons, and was almost satisfied with the fit of the white satin domino in which she had just been dressed for her intended visit to

the masquerade ;—when unexpectedly the private door leading to the apartments of the Queen Regent was opened, and Christina of Spain stood before her.

“ Sister,” said her Majesty, “ we must cause you some disappointment. It is our wish to see the Santa Catalina ball. Your domino will fit me, and, Carlota, you will remain at the palace.”

“ Your Majesty will be exposed—traitors may assail your life—mine is not worthy their notice.”

“ In that lies our design—to be taken for the Infanta. None will suspect us there : it is our pleasure, sister!”

Mortification and fear were alike visible in the disdainful glance of Carlota ; but the will of her sovereign sister must be obeyed ; and ere she recovered from her disappointment, the Queen Regent, masked in the princess’ dress, had left the apartment, leaning on the arm of Muños; and the steeds that were wont to be driven for the haughty Infanta transported with velocity the

less imperious but ever capricious Christina, in her sister's carriage. The Corps de Garde at the Puerta del Sol had barely notice from the outriders to fall in in time,—the drum beat the salute to the Infanta's equipage almost as soon as it left the palace,—and the soi-disant Carlota was in the entrance of the Santa Catalina halls.

The vast saloon resounded with the lively mirth and dance of the throng. The gitana was yet the ruling star, and in her wake she traced a galaxy of admirers. But her own spirit of mirth and repartee had vanished, and she herself but followed in the track of her master-light. Cautiously and undetected she observed every movement, she almost heard every whisper ; and Herbert de Clifford, enrapt in earnest conversation, little thought that each look and word addressed to his companions sank with pain into another's breast.

" And now farewell," said the Maja, who had

previously awakened the most extraordinary interest and emotion in his breast, and had again accosted him.

“ Inexplicable being ! In a foreign land—far from the scenes of my birth—am I to learn such secrets, and not to meet with thee again ? ”

“ I shall be near thee—and for thy good,” continued the mysterious mask. “ But beware the Chevalier,” she continued, as she significantly raised her finger ; “ if ever thou reveal to him communication of mine, we never meet again.”

Meanwhile there was a gathering rumour in the saloons ; and the name of the Infanta Luisa Carlota was whispered around. Some said it was a *black* satin domino, others the Valenciana, others the Catalana mask ; but the knowing ones prided themselves on better information, as they glanced respectfully at the white satin domino trimmed with pink, which remained stationary in a corner of the ball-room.

The Chevalier Montreil had gradually approached with every mark of submissive and obsequious respect, and had accosted her in a low tone of voice.

The domino did not immediately reply, but addressed her companion.

"He is the foreign Don Quixote," answered Muños. "My royal mistress may derive amusement from his extravagance."

"Caballero," said the royal mask, "What news?"

"Ah, Infanta!" exclaimed Montreil, "the day that will witness the Castilian crown sit upon the brows of Luisa Carlota, will be news of salvation to Spain!"

The domino drew nearer to Montreil. "From what do you infer such an event?"

"From your Highness' master spirit, and from the unpopularity of Christina."

"How would you advise, in order to realize

your prognostications, and win the crown of Spain?"

"The magnet of its metal is your wisdom, Infanta! Adopt my suggestions—and it shall fall upon your head without an effort."

"Speak!"

"Leave the imbecile Queen to her base amours; thwart not with wholesome counsel her pursuits. Is not the low-born Muños an eyesore to Castilian noblesse? — the vulgar milliner, Teresita, her confidante, another? Think you the oppressed multitude will love a creature engrossed by sensual pleasures and thirsting avarice? One half of Spain rebels already; the other half *endures* her only. Thus are the odds against her now; and mark me, gracious Infanta! In the north—the west—rebellion spreads like a contagion. The east—the south, are in weeds: from Seville, Grenada, comes with gigantic stride the pestilence of cholera,

and with the first warm summer's breath, 'twill creep with poisonous pace along the Manzanares to the court. Then—then is your day, if you have the heart to dare! Let Christina cower for her life, and shun Madrid. But you, Infanta, must brave the danger. I, meanwhile, will seal alliances abroad, and fortify your bulwarks."

" And what becomes of Christina ?"

" Be she pensioned off, upon the plea of incapacity to govern."

" And the crowned infant, Isabel ?"

" Must be affianced, Princess, to your eldest boy ! Thus is the regency your own ; and when your son is of age, he wears the crown of Ferdinand."

" How shall I thank you, Chevalier ?"

" By giving me the means of devoting myself to the service of your Royal Highness—access, as need may be, to your royal presence."

" But you must beware of spies. Suppose the Regent Queen should learn—"

"Leave that to me, Infanta! Have I not professed to give her cause the succour of an army? She will not doubt my fealty; but when it marches on Madrid, it will be to proclaim Luisa Carlota Regent of Spain."

The royal mask now beckoned to her suite to leave the ball.

"When may I hope to be admitted to the palace?"

"Whenever the Chevalier has the heart to present himself, we will be there!"

Her Majesty moved on; and the state carriage of the Infanta rapidly conveyed its royal occupant back to the palace.

CHAPTER XII.

"Even in his mother's womb the heretic is already the indisputable property of the devil; for which reason he is not so frequently teased and tempted by the arch-enemy as we Christians are, who cannot be deprived of our claims on Heaven, except by great wickedness and impiety."

DOCTRINES OF THE JESUITS.

Heretic converted—A Royal Godmother—The Child of Nature—An unlucky Pleader.

"Move me nearer the casement," said Juanita.

"I love the sun; he is the common wealth of all!"

"Even of the unfortunate," said Merced.

The two sisters were then silent; but as they looked on each other, they melted into tears.

The apartment of Juanita had been tastefully adorned by her own hands. The flowers,

grouped in vases at each corner, formed a lively contrast to the serious and religious subjects of her paintings, which represented her favourite saints. On one side was a little altar-piece, surmounted by the image of the blessed "Virgen de los Dolores :" a scapulary, and receptacle for holy water, were before it, and a kneeling cushion at the foot. It was here the maiden had poured forth her devotions, ever since her mother forbade her attendance on public worship, more especially since her health had begun to decline ; and the calm resignation depicted on her countenance was mainly owing to the frequent earnest prayer whereto she had recourse daily. Whenever her lip dared to repine, her knee was instantly bent in contrition to God.

"Will Herbert visit us to-day ?" inquired Juanita, with returning serenity.

"Should I know his intentions ?" said Merced.

"Methinks you blush, sister," rejoined Juanita. "Beware! there is more danger to your peace in the quiet, unassuming attentions of the young Briton, than in the more impassioned devotion of our countrymen. Remember, Merced, he is——"

"Spare him! spare him! You would say a heretic! I shall never love the infidel!"

"Well, 'tis pity! Would I could save him. Does he ever talk to thee of religion?"

"Never! never!"

"O that such a mind had the blessed light of faith!"

"Alas! can we poor girls persuade, when the holy church cannot convince? Let us hope he may one day repent and be forgiven."

The loud bell from the steeple of St. Ignazio now boomed the announcement of some high church ceremony.

"Is it a mass for the dead?" inquired Juanita.

"No, sister; it announces the reception of Alice Downie into the bosom of the true church. On this day she publicly recants the errors of her Anglican faith."

"Praised be Heaven!" said Juanita, as she rose to cast herself, in thanksgiving, at the foot of the cross.

It was as Merced had said. At eleven o'clock of the forenoon, the aisles and avenues of the church of St. Ignazio were crowded with both pious and curious, to witness the rare and extraordinary ceremony of an Englishwoman's recantation of the errors of her national creed.

The haughty pomp of the catholic church had collected every artificial adornment that could add to the magnificence of the altar. The portrait of the infant Sovereign of Spain was suspended over the presbytery. The Queen Regent had graciously signified her intention of being sponsor at the ceremony by which an erring creature was redeemed from heresy. The

Archdeacon of Madrid attended as her Majesty's proxy, whilst the throne that supported the painted image of royalty was spread with purple velvet embroidered with gold.

A long line of priests, magnificently arrayed in their sacerdotal dresses of high mass, and each holding a lighted taper, extended from the porch to the altar. It was with difficulty the procession could make its way through the dense body of spectators, who were eager to catch a glimpse of that being about to abandon the faith of her fathers. On each side of the steps leading to the porch through which she was to enter, was drawn up a file of the royal guard of Alarbarderos, who were obliged to use force to repress the orthodox mob.

The penitent arrived, and, within view of the immense multitude which had collected in the streets, at the windows, and on the roofs of the houses, prostrated herself upon the steps of the portal. It was a moment of intense interest to

the spectators, and of exultation to the haughty priests.

She was arrayed in white; a muslin veil covered her head, and swept the ground; its folds were doubled over her face, and no one could catch the working of her countenance, so carefully was it concealed—more in shame, perhaps, for apostacy, than for the religion she abjured.

Her prostration at the foot of the temple was somewhat prolonged by the officiating priests; that moment of triumph over the abhorred tenets of Luther producing too delicious an intoxication of their pride to allow of any abridgment of the humiliation of the quondam protestant. Alice, however, who had miscalculated the strength of her nerves, was overpowered by the awful aspect of a dense crowd, of whose attention she was the absorbing object. To rise up again was beyond her ability. The Archdeacon and the Curate stepped forward, and,

lifting her between them, led her triumphantly to the foot of the altar—where, before the cross, she forswore the errors of the Protestant faith, and prayed that an all-merciful God would receive her into the bosom of the only true catholic church.

Being then conducted by the Vicar to the baptismal font, which was adorned for the occasion with cloth of gold, she received, in the name of the ever-blessed and incomprehensible Trinity, a new appellation, together with a new faith, and Alice was metamorphosed (after the name of the young Queen) into Isabel Christina.

It was a proud, a lofty peal, full and long, that burst from the powerful organ of the church of St. Ignazio. All the choristers of the hundred temples of Madrid had assembled in order to chaunt the glories of Heaven, on occasion of the conversion of an unbeliever ; and the majestic Te Deum that swelled on high from a thousand voices bore with it the incense of many an uncorrupted heart exulting for the

cause of religion, however questionable might be the vow of an apostate.

There was, however, one who joined not in this jubilee. He had taken his station among the crowd near to the altar, and gazed on the ceremony with painful emotion ; but he endeavoured in vain to obtain a glimpse of the face of her who thus made a pageant of conversion, and at length his indignation gave place to pity.

The crowd dispersed, and De Clifford was borne out of the church along with it. Lost in reverie, he unconsciously proceeded, and found himself at the door of the house where dwelt Merced de Valmarino. He hesitated ; but there was a power strongly felt, though undefined, that "marshalled him the way," and he was within the apartments before he could reason with himself on the propriety of such frequent visits.

"Don Herbert," said Juanita, "we were thinking of you."

"Then, Señorita, we are on equal terms ; my

unpremeditated appearance before you can vouch for *my thoughts*."

"I hate compliment," said Merced; "it does not become an Englishman."

"Explain yourself, Merced. Would you deny us discernment or refinement?"

"To speak candidly, Don Herbert," said Merced, "your face is too honest for a flatterer's."

"You commit, charming Merced, the fault you condemn."

At that moment the Reverend Rodrigo entered the room, and crossed himself as he stooped before the image of the Holy Virgin on the little altar-piece.

"Peace and good-will, daughters; this is a memorable day for the holy church."

"Wherefore, Don Rodrigo?"

"An English heretic is reclaimed!"

Merced looked first at De Clifford, and then on the ground. "Forgive me, Santo Padre;

but——” and she looked significantly at Herbert, and imploringly at the priest.

“ *You should have been there, Señor Inglese,*” said the Jesuit.

“ *I was!*”

“ It presented a noble example to follow,” continued the Father.

“ We should know the motives, ere we can so decide,” rejoined the Englishman.

“ Most true, Señor. Yet may I ask of your experience, if you were ever present at a like ceremony, where a son of the holy church has proved apostate?”

“ I *have* witnessed the recantation of the dogmas of Rome.”

“ Blasphemy!” ejaculated the priest.

“ And by a daughter of catholic Spain, at the entreaty of an English husband,” coolly added De Clifford.

“ Infamous!” cried the exasperated Priest.

“ Say cruel, pitiful, unmanly, to demand from

a helpless woman the renouncement of her country's faith. By Heaven ! I would not trust that woman who, either from fear or passion, would abjure her fathers' religion."

The eyes of the sisters were fixed upon Herbert, while Rodrigo bent forward as if to catch his meaning ere the words could pass his lips. De Clifford continued :

" Forgive my frankness," and he looked timidly at Merced ; " but, according to my humble notion, if the principles grafted in infancy, and nurtured with our growth, can perish like those fruits which turn to ashes on the lip—can be abjured for the kiss of passion,—how fragile must be the most holy of *social* vows !—how weak the tie that binds a wife, if the tongue may lightly recant that faith treasured up from earliest childhood."

" Señor Inglese," said the Priest, " we accord to you the virtue of frankness, but we seek not gratuitous opinions from the disciples of

Luther. Caution, here, may serve you better. Farewell."

A silence of some minutes followed the departure of the Jesuit.

"How lovely and consoling is the faith of a Christian!" said Juanita.

"How strikingly exemplified in yourself," rejoined Herbert. "You would do honour to any creed; your heart errs not, though your judgment may. Who dares to maintain that he is right?"

"Yet should we not seek to arrive at the truth? You said," continued Merced, "you would not trust the heart of a woman who should abjure her religion—"

"If from fear or love, Merced; but not if from earnest inquiry. Should she be fairly convinced of the fallacy of first-conceived opinions, that is another thing. It were easier, methinks, to find acceptance, with sentiments formed on the ardent inquiry of a sincere heart, even

though erroneous, than with those taken on trust from others, even though correct."

"Granted!" interrupted Juanita; "and think you not that the believer who retains all the tenets resulting from inquiry, with the added, though perhaps unnecessary, rites and ceremonies of prescription, may hold the safer faith? Were it not better to fulfil too many duties than to be deficient even in one?"

"Your argument is not new, Juanita; but, in fact, opinions on abstract points are of little consequence, when faith is as pure as yours."

Juanita felt all the gratification of conquest, for Herbert was either defeated, or sufficiently gallant to leave the fair sex possession of the field.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Oh woman
thy once crack'd honesty
Is like the breaking of whole money,—
It never comes to good—but wastes away."

SECOND MAIDEN'S TRAGEDY.

An Apostate—The Daughter of the Verdugo—A rejected Suitor.

AFTER the ceremony of her recantation, Alice Downie retired to her private and modest apartment in the street *Mayor*. There, after exchanging the costume she had worn during the service for her customary dark dress and mantilla, she passed, now again unknown and unnoticed, through the narrow passages leading to the

Plaza Mayor, and gained the abode of Marco Diaz.

She had undergone the gaze of thousands during that splendid celebration, as imposing in exterior display as awful in its spirit. Had conviction prompted the act? That her inmost heart alone could answer. Meanwhile the scoffers of her newly adopted creed looked suspiciously upon her motives; and the pension, held out by the church as a bait of allurement, was considered by them an all-convincing argument for her apostacy.

One pure, one sinless heart, at least, had rejoiced at Alice's conversion, with unmixed and unsuspecting joy. She had heard, though she could not see, the ceremony. Retired within her inmost thoughts, kneeling in a sombre aisle of the church, the pious Manuella raised her fervent thanksgiving to Heaven, as if the burthen of another's soul were linked with that of her own.

On the third story of the southern side of the Carcel de Corte of Madrid is an apartment occupied by a functionary indispensable in every capital city,—namely, the common hangman. Of all that degraded caste, there are no individuals more secluded from intercourse with their fellow-creatures than are those of Spain. From the circumstance of their being compelled to open the gates of the arena whenever a bull-fight takes place, and to surrender the keys to the alguazil on duty, their features become at once familiar to all ; whilst that officer, in order to avoid coming in contact with the executioner's person, extends his hat to receive the keys, amidst the loud execrations of the surrounding multitude vented upon the unfortunate hangman.

To this class belonged the verdugo, Marco Diaz. Yet was the mind of Marco cast in no vulgar mould. The office had descended to him as an heir-loom, from generation to generation. It insured to its possessor an income of no mean

amount; and although excluded from society, he had perhaps not much to regret. He had argued himself into a belief, that if the advantages of general intercourse with men were balanced against the concentrated happiness and circumscribed affection of his family, little would remain attached to the former to envy.

Such were Marco's thoughts and feelings as he gazed on his daughter Manuella; in whom indeed were centered all his love and pride, and well might a father gaze with delight upon such innocence and beauty.

Deprived of her mother at an early age, Manuella had attained, beneath his paternal care, her fourteenth year. She remained the child of nature even amid that vortex of pride, deceit, and artfulness, a populous metropolis. But cut off from intercourse with her sex, she had grown up a being purely unsophisticated. Her faults were unlike those of another,—her virtues had a stamp of their own. No school had formed

her,—no fashion had vitiated her taste,—no companionship had marred the originality of her mind. She was all nature ; graceful, even elegant, though untaught; and beautiful, though unadorned. On her high and finely arched forehead, her jet-black hair was simply parted ; whilst the classic contour of her head, and the graceful fall of her shoulders, whose whiteness had not been tinged by the burning sun of her native skies, would have immortalized the chisel of a statuary.

Nor was her innocent and active mind unenriched. Clear and vigorous perceptions had matured her thought ; she read to analyze, and analyzed to reflect. Her world was her home, her father, and her books. She was a being without regrets, as she was without envy.

The only female visitor to the apartments of Marco Diaz, was Alice Downie. It was here that she reposed her confidence and affections. No fellowship could intervene, and supplant her

in the attachment of the hangman's daughter. Day after day, year after year, Alice had visited Manuella. She had watched her from infancy to womanhood with the love and solicitude even of a parent, and the child had insensibly imbibed a deep attachment in return.

Alice Downie was one of a numerous class of beings, who, having a game of interest and profit to play in the world, conceal in public those feelings which give them a totally different character in their family circle. Like a piece of cloth with two faces, the best side is exhibited to the beings they wish to cherish.

Alice had long been distinguished by certain members of the court and political leaders for her discernment and aptitude in intrigue. She was one of those who, under the cloak of teachers, governesses, or confidential servants, carry on the trade of a go-between, which their rank in life enables them to cultivate with impunity. Her dear-bought experience, added to

a quick perception of, and early acquaintance with, the hypocritical machinations of the ambitious, enabled her to play well the part marked out for her. Calomarde had often made her an instrument of policy during his official career; and when he fell, the minions who survived him also learned to appreciate the abilities of Alice, and she might still be considered a secret spy of their clique. Under pretext of teaching her native language, she found easy access wherever political expediency required her to appear, and her introduction always came from a quarter not calculated to create suspicion. Once installed in her ostensible vocation, her own plausibility effected all she aimed at; and the confiding families who received, soon felt a growing interest in her, being led to think that the employment they gave relieved one who had been afflicted by early calamities, and who, no longer able to appear in her native land among those of corresponding rank,

had fled her country for ever, to hide her poverty, unknown and unregarded, amongst strangers.

Sometimes, it is true, her machinations led to further and direr consequences than she herself anticipated; for she was impelled by a master-hand, through the intrigues opened to her. However, even as the tool of others in the art of falsehood, the task assorts with her inclinations. Duplicity had been so long a habit with her, that the straightforwardness of truth and sincerity presented a road to which she would have felt herself an utter stranger, and would quickly turn away therefrom, to thread the accustomed mazes of intrigue. She was ever prone to view the proceedings of others through a distorted medium, and to ascribe to them a meaning never contemplated. Thus her interpretations and conclusions had always a sinister propensity.

But it is curious to remark, that Alice, al-

though isolated in life from relationship of every kind, and in whose breast the passions bore undisputed sway over the dormant affections, had nevertheless insensibly contracted a devoted attachment to Manuella Diaz ; and as the child grew up, and was entrusted to her tuition, she yearned towards her pupil with all a parent's tenderness. Her precepts and her feelings towards the secluded offspring of the executioner were anomalous to her worldly avocations. Whenever she entered the apartments of Marco, Alice experienced the sensation of a culprit during divine worship, who abstains from sinning *there*, but resumes the course of iniquity as soon as the service is over. She watched with the jealous care of a presiding spirit the formation of her pupil's mind, in order to guard it against those seductive snares to which she herself had so awfully succumbed, and which she was so well qualified to point out ; yet no sooner did she quit that being whose presence

chained her for awhile to virtue, than the good she had been inculcating she deliberately sinned against.

Thus, to aid in refining Manuella's mind, Alice carefully avoided any allusion to the calling of her father ; and the latter himself, who was endowed with strong but not coarse ideas, and whose heart was seated in the right place, had improved in consequence of the contempt of mankind, and, living now only for his child, strove to render himself unvaryingly the object of her love and esteem. Alice, therefore, had not much difficulty in keeping Manuella from all perception of preparation for her father's disgusting duties, whenever the law required his attendance ; whilst, to prevent her heart from revolting at the estimation of her origin, she would refer to those times when the infliction of the punishment of death was deemed a prerogative of sovereignty, and observe that, among the Israelites, he who officially rid society of a

scourge, was considered a benefactor of the human race.

But whatever were Manuella's real sentiments on this subject, they were never avowed. Her lot was the more easily borne, since she had early been taught resignation ; yet, as she emerged from childhood, and in her sunny clime was rapidly approaching that age which to woman is generally a decisive epoch of future destiny, she trembled at the prospect before her. Excommunication from society, in consequence of her father's avocation, reduced her to the degraded sphere of his exclusive caste. If her father died, she would be alone in the universe ; if she married, she must become the wife of a public executioner, and perhaps the mother of those who must butcher the felons of generations yet to come. These reflections silently, but gradually, gained upon her. Already had her hand been sought by the verdugo of Valladolid ; but, though her father was pro-

pitious to the match, he had never pressed it, suffering the anxious and handsome Ferrol to plead his own cause. It was a hopeless one : the injudicious proposer had put forward his professional merits — his expectations of succeeding, on her father's death, to the office in the capital — and, by way of settler, his gains and emoluments arising from perquisites attached to the increased number of sufferers on the scaffold, ever since the constitution had been put down by the edicts of Ferdinand.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ Furia y humo respirando
Los ojos como dos brasas
Los cuernos ensangrentados—
Con la pezúna esparciendo
Ardiente polvo, el mas bravo
Retinto, a quien dio Jarama
Yerba encantada en sus campos.”

SAAVEDRA.

The Prado—The Encierro—A Mad Bull—Adventures in a Churchyard—A Ghost—The fruitless Search at length rewarded.

A BRIGHT, cheerful morning, accompanied with a fresh and bracing air, succeeded a night's revel at the Santa Catalina rooms. Towards four of the afternoon, the saloon walk of the Prado was promenaded by the usual visitors, but by few

others. Those especially who had attended the masquerade alluded to, had scarcely yet left their beds. As evening advanced, however, dusky groups of promenaders appeared to increase, and here and there a mantilla ventured to brave the keen air in the open space of the walk.

The Prado, nevertheless, was fashionably attended. But the effect was not enhanced by the dusky vesture of the citizens ; the mantle of mourning for the late monarch, (*que esta en gloria !*) was universal. A few manollas in their black farthingales—the señoritas in their deep mantillas—were not, *en groupe*, seen to advantage. The monotony of costume was fatiguing to the sight, and the national dress, picturesque — when encountered individually, impressed a gloom on the appearance of the multitude. Still the scene was enlivened by a sprinkling of military uniforms. Even the antiquated regimentals of the *gardes du corps*

yielded a relief to the eye; whilst the more martial equipment of the horse grenadiers, the carbineers, and the horse artillery, was enhanced by the contrast.

There was, at the same time, a pretty plentiful mixture of the ridiculous. The junior aspirants in the army, such as were raised, through patronage, to rank with veteran officers, were equipped, according to their stature, with the full complement of trappings, and a sword commensurate to the hand of its owner—reminding one of boyish times, when our army agents supplied us from a toy-shop. Some of these heroes, under twelve years of age, already held rank in the royal guard, and even took precedence of captains belonging to troops of the line.

The drive, from the fountain of Cybele to that of Neptune, (the orthodox boundary established by fashion,) was occupied by a few berlinas of the primitive era of coach-building, and a *coche*

or two *de coleras*, with a team of half-a-dozen mules, equally antiquated. Alongside, and bordering the promenade, the equestrian exquisites, mounted on practised steeds, cantered without progressing, keeping pace with some belle in the walk, and, with much ado about nothing, displaying the sweeping tails and neatly-plaited manes of their horses; whilst the never-absent Duque de O—— sported his Andalusian courser, (the gift of his sovereign,) the envy of every amateur cavalier.

The dusky crowd, which, observed as a whole, appeared to be a dense procession moving like a funeral cortège, certainly turned out to be, when approached and mingled with, by no means of the mournful order. The buzz of compliments — “Avhurr!” the familiar recognition; “Lady, at your feet!” — “Caballero, I kiss your hands!” — the fluttering of fans; the sideling, and crowding, and elbowing; the shuffling sound of many feet; the ogling of

eyes — all were observable ; whilst, now and then, the dark, full orbs of a Mexicana, or the fiery glances of a Peruviana (*hijas del Sol*), spread ruin and devastation amongst the combustible hearts of the Lechuginos ; or, no less redoubtable, the full and liquid softness of the ojos Arabes of an Andaluza, played their Moorish artillery to the cost of the heroic lords of the creation, whose only chance of defence lay in having the citadel of their susceptibility previously invested.

A detachment of cuirassiers, stationed at one end of the avenue, proclaimed the presence of royalty. The Infanta Luisa Carlota's carriage appeared, drawn by six horses, and preceded and followed by outriders. The Infanta sat forward, and engrossed the window of her barouche, almost concealing the ever-smiling, good-humoured, fat, little Francisco, her husband. With a quick glance she seemed to observe every recognition of her presence made by the loyal

Castilians, in taking off their hats each time the royal carriage passed. The compliment was, indeed, scarcely returned at all by the haughty Princess, although little Francisco was evidently warm with the exercise of doffing his hat and waving his hand; and our facetious friend MacMaw was prominent in the public demonstration of loyalty, owing to his more profound and protracted obeisances; thus deservedly drawing upon himself the simpering recognition of the Infante.

“Valgame Dios!” exclaimed Don Jayme, as he took the arm of Herbert de Clifford: “The worn brim of a Spaniard’s hat is the surest criterion of the wearer’s loyalty; for, by continually flourishing it for the Queen, her brats, the infantes, the infantas, and all the little infantes, it must be bare in a week, or we may doubt his fidelity.”

“Heads were so loose under the despotic Ferdinand,” rejoined Herbert, “it is, perhaps,

through a kind of sympathy that they are now so easily set in motion."

"But observe," said Jayme, "the mantilla before us; she is considered one of our belles. I once admired her, and sighed at her feet, but the conquest appeared too easy. 'Pon honour! I begin to think that the durability of my admiration is proportioned to the difficulty of success."

"Then, by your account, Jayme, to become a faithful swain, you must never gain your object."

"It is a hard conclusion, though fair according to the premises. My only resource is in the excitement of fresh conquests, fresh oaths, and consequent fresh abandonments."

They had by this time sauntered to the end of the saloon walk abutting on the Calle de Alcala, and found that broad and magnificent street thronged with people, who were moving in one direction towards the gate of the city.

"By my sins!" said Jayme, "the bulls come in to-night for the fight on Monday; it will be worth while witnessing their arrival;" and, so saying, they turned their steps into the current of the crowd.

It was a gay and animated scene that enlivened the extensive avenue leading to the gate of Alcala, on the evening preceding the opening of the lists for the bull-fights;—the more so, occurring after the long recess which had ensued upon the death of the late king. The air was mild for the time of year. The connoisseurs already calculated upon a good fight, as the first warmth of spring would animate the bulls; whilst the general mass, who did not look so deeply into causes and effects, regretted that the burning sun of a summer day was wanting to goad them on to a sufficient degree of desperate contention.

The elegant crowds of the Prado that had thronged the saloon-walk began to diminish,

and, like a stream that had burst its bank, and found a new outlet, were gliding in the direction of the gates of Alcala ; whilst the tinkling gear attached to the harnessed mules of the cale-sinas, as they dashed on towards the gates, formed an accompaniment to the song and shout of the lively and exhilarated manollas within, as their favourite cortejo, equipped in the gay and characteristic dress of Andalusia, slackened his purse-strings to entertain with munificence “the pupil of his eye,” and “the kernel of his heart.”

“Pan y toros!” (bread and bull-fights,) ejaculated a muleteer who was running at full speed abreast with the mule of his hired calesina.

“Thou blasphemest, fellow!” said the gay matador, who had engaged the conveyance for his dulcinea, and was habited in the superb majo dress, “toros y pan (bulls before bread) is my motto!—Y la queridita,” as he turned

back to bask himself in the beams of the flashing eyes of his sprightly manolla.

"La queridita primera!" returned the muleteer, chuckling at his repartee.

"Viva! viva!"

Just then Jayme, as he pressed forward, grasped the arm of Herbert, and drew his attention to two females who were walking before them, the delicate shape and elastic step of one of whom would have charmed the most fastidious beholder. Passing them, he endeavoured to see her countenance; but the black mantilla was instantly drawn in a closer fold, and a momentary glimpse alone repaid the attempt.

"Por Santiago de Campostello, it is *she!*!" whispered Don Jayme.

"Who?" interrupted Herbert, himself fascinated by that momentary gaze.

"The beautiful unknown!" and he turned to look again. But the bold and searching

glance of Don Jayme had so much of the libertine in it, that modesty shrank from its pertinacity, and the females turned their steps to avoid so inquisitive a stare.

“ Herbert !” said Jayme, with disappointment in his features : “ Thus am I ever baulked !—thus am I ever avoided by that angelic creature ! doomed ever to love—to madden even for her, and her alone ; but never—never to know her ! Seldom indeed has she crossed my path ; and always has eluded my pursuit. I have fee’d emissaries, but in vain has my gold been lavished, to learn her name or place of abode. . . . On ! let us follow ! This night we *must* discover the beautiful unknown.”

The day was on the decline as that dense mass of population hastened through the gates of Alcala, and turned to the left, leaving behind them the immense amphitheatre for the fights. A few scattered buildings, in a ruinous state, line the road for about half a mile, while beyond,

a vast undulating plain extends to the foot of the Guadarrama mountains, which, at that distance, form a dark grey back-ground, blending—at the moment we speak of—with the deepening shades of night, which was closing around. The surface of the plain, as far as eye could reach, was dreary—without a tree, without even a shrub, to vary its monotony. Towards the verge of this expanse, the eyes of many thousands were turned, and the desert steppe was swiftly traversed by crowds, either on horseback or on foot. Among them might be observed the glittering and showy Cuirassiers of the Guards, whose bright corslets and shining helmets reflected the rays of the setting sun, and, as they sported their high-mettled Andalusian chargers, gave light and life to the scene.

“ Los Toros !” shouted an idler : but it was a false alarm ; they were not yet to be descried.

“ As soon as you perceive a dark spot gathering in that direction,” observed Don Jayme to

Herbert, pointing as he spoke, “ then, as if the horns of the bulls were within arms’ length, (although still miles off,) you will see these brave fellows all hurrying out of the way ! And behold ! the Cuirassiers are coming towards us at full speed, clearing the road of stragglers, and forcing them to seek their own security. Now—now ! in yonder direction you may distinguish a gathering speck !—the bulls are in sight—they will be here in a few minutes, for they advance at the top of their speed.”

There was now a sudden movement amongst the people, who took different directions, as their judgment suggested, both for safety and a near view of the herd. The road leading to the amphitheatre sank gradually from the common level of the plain as it neared the gates of the dens where the beasts were to be confined ; and on the rising ground on each side the spectators had chiefly collected. Men, women, and children were there, straining their sight to catch

the earliest view of the wild tenants of the plains.

On they bounded, silently, but more and more swiftly as they neared the goal. It was a brief spectacle—but, to share all the depth of its interest with the exulting beholders, would require a Spanish heart. Their breath was suspended as the rushing herd swept along, guided by the picadors, who goaded the leading heifers with the points of their lances at the utmost speed of their own Andalusian steeds—till horsemen, heifers, and bulls struck together into the narrow road that was palisaded off, and led into the arena; when, swifter than glance or even thought could follow, the gates of the amphitheatre were closed upon them.

But just as the picadors had turned off into the road of the circus, one of the bulls, enraged at the glowing dress of a bystander, darted aside into the adjoining field.

There was a fearful shout raised as the furious

animal advanced. The multitude retreated in a mass towards the spot where stood Don Jayme and Herbert. In that impetuous movement a young and delicate female, uttering a piercing shriek, fell to the ground full in the brute's career. De Clifford, who with Don Jayme had stood near, perceived her critical situation. He ran and snatched her from the ground. The bull first plunged at a horseman, but was received upon the point of his sword which gored its neck. On came the wild, the yet free inhabitant of the boundless plain. Flight was impossible. The young girl thrust De Clifford from her ; and tearing from her comb the dark mantilla, spread it as she stood up firmly, in the headlong course of the animal, which, enraged and bleeding, sprang towards the extended scarf, and carried away the rent trophy on his horns.

But the daring effort of the young female was momentary ; it was too great for nature to sustain. She staggered ! Herbert caught her in

his arms, and carried her quickly from the spot. She lay in his embrace as heavily as a corpse; but he could feel the quick beating of her heart, as it swelled beneath the folds of her dress, unconfined by the shackles of the corset, not generally adopted in Spain by very young females.

Night was approaching as the affrighted crowd regained the high road. The street of Alcala was again thronged with the lovers of the amphitheatre, and that huge plain over which ten thousand beings had ranged within the last hour, under all the excitement of pleasure, was now deserted. The surrounding stillness was interrupted only by the distant lowing of the bulls, who for the first time found themselves cooped within a limited space.

Herbert hurried on over the deserted prairie with his fair burthen in his arms; but as he had at first taken a direction opposite to that of the city, it became necessary for him to retrace

his steps. It was dark when he regained the city wall, and followed its outline till he reached the gate of Fuencarral, which, to his great mortification, he found closed. In vain did he demand admission ; he was either unheard or unheeded ; and after repeated attempts to attract the attention of the sentinel within, he relinquished the effort, and, in hopes of finding a shelter, took the broad road leading from the gate. But the naked inhospitable environs of Madrid spread far and wide.

At length, utterly exhausted, he approached with a gleam of hope a dusky building, hardly discernible amidst the shades of night. It presented lofty brick walls, but neither casement nor door could be seen, and disappointment was again the doom of Herbert.

His steps had nearly measured every angle of the building, when, to his joy, his hand, groping along, grasped the bar of a wicket, which moving on its hinges as he pressed forward, admitted his

entrance. But no signs of the living were there. However, the enclosure screened the wanderers from the bitter sweep of the blast over the dreary plain ; and thus, partly sheltered, he suffered his gentle burthen to repose upon the ground, whilst he took a careful survey of the place. He found it to consist of a square enclosure, the ground in the centre being even ; but darkness did not permit him to define the object of the building.

Meanwhile the young maiden gradually recovered. She had partly raised herself, when, leaning against the wall, her hand rested upon the carved skull and cross—those symbols of death which generally ornament a catholic tomb.

A sudden and awful thought entered her mind, struggling to recover its consciousness. She imagined she must have died, and that the cold marble device her hand had traced, was engraven upon her own sepulchre. Dumb—feeling as if every sense relating to earth were gone, except

the conviction of being entombed,—she instinctively doubted even the power of her frame to move, and felt as if chained to one eternal thought, that of her soul's separate existence.

Thus did Herbert de Clifford find her when he returned. He took her hand, but it lay cold and motionless within his own. He pressed his cheek to her lips; they parted not with the breath of life. He clasped her to his breast; she yielded like an inanimate form; and as he carefully drew around the folds of her dress to guard her limbs against the chilly night wind she offered not the resistance of feminine reserve to the attentions of a stranger.

Awe-struck at such a position, afraid to desert her in order to seek assistance, and already exhausted with fatigue, Herbert became himself motionless through irresolution, when suddenly the distant sound of horses' hoofs drew his attention. His first impulse was to convey the girl back to the road; but lest her weight should

retard his speed, he bore her to an angle of the wall, where a sort of recess protected her, and then hastened for assistance. Approaching the wicket, he heard voices ; and could discern, though dimly, a dark group of men, who were entering the enclosure. Herbert's first impulse was to claim their aid ; but a moment's reflection changed his purpose ; and as they drew near, he silently retraced his steps to his fair companion.

The light of a torch, which was now kindled by one of the party, cast a gleam as far as the retreat of the young man, and in one moment his glance surveyed the objects around him. The high wall of that enclosure was bricked up as vaults for the dead. It was, in fact, a cemetery of the metropolis. The narrow tombs arose in lines one above another, along the high walls. Numerous arched sepulchres were yet open and yawning for tenants ; whilst those closed and built up bore in front the titles of the occupants, together with the insignia of death. A massive

cross was erected in the centre of the ground, the shadow whereof, occasioned by the torch alluded to, favoured, at that moment, Herbert's concealment. Alarmed concerning his charge, for whom, in consequence of accumulating dangers, he felt increased interest, he caught up the unresisting figure, and placed her in an empty vault, whilst he himself retired into the recess formed by the angle of the wall.

"Drugs for the Christinos," said one of the group, who were now approaching the open vault where Herbert had deposited the girl, and were bearing with them something of weight.

"Plumbs for Isabel," said another. "Which is the vault?"

"The fourth from the right: the others are almost all brimful. Five hundred muskets. . ."

"And fifty now!" with which intimation the speaker secreted in the vault—thrusting them in with a harsh, grating sound—a load of muskets with bayonets.

Herbert had at first concluded that the party consisted either of banditti or facciosos, terms at this period almost synonymous. But when he distinguished the arms in their possession, he formed a more accurate judgment of their class, and at once understood that the cemetery had been selected for the concealment of fire-arms, preparatory to a revolution in Madrid ! He had scarcely come to this conclusion, when, earnestly watching their motions, he beheld them level the barrels to the vault in which he had deposited the helpless girl ; and his hair stood on end as, with a clashing sound, they thrust in the pointed muskets. He rushed forward to the spot !

" Hold !" cried he, gasping for breath !

" Treason !" exclaimed the party.

" Who art thou ?" said one, who now stood over him, presenting a knife to his throat.

" You have murdered her !" ejaculated Herbert.

"A foreigner! Demonio!" exclaimed the Spaniard; "and if I mistake not, the companion of Montreil."

"Quiet him at once," said another.

"That would hardly be policy, Señores; he is one of us."

"How!"

"The thousand muskets landed at Ferrol for the blessed 'Carlos Quinto,' are they not the gift of the Duke of C——d R——o?"

"What then?"

"Well! here we have our ally's faithful agent! companion to the Chevalier Montreil."

"Let him explain the cause of his presence here."

During this time the girl, who had suffered Herbert de Clifford to place her in the vault, was gradually regaining the tone of her mind; and the ensuing tumult, and noise of the fire-arms, which had been deposited, not in the vault she occupied, but in the next, which, from its simi-

larity and proximity, Clifford had in his alarm mistaken, recalled her wandering thoughts. A well-known voice, which she distinguished amongst the rest, assisted the recovery of her senses ; and creeping out of the vault, she presented herself before the astounded party.

“ Game !” cried the sturdy stentorian voice of him who first observed her: “ Sport ! my brave fellows.”

“ Fish—flesh—or fowl ?”

“ Neither ! but a ghost !”

“ A very tempting one. First come, first . . .”

“ Hold,” said Herbert, as he struck back the ruffian who had thrown his arm round the person of the shrinking maiden.—The Spaniard grasped the hilt of a dagger, but his hand was held down by the man who had recognised Herbert as the companion of Montreil.

“ Fair play !” said the interceder. “ We must draw lots for the girl ! You Caballero,”

addressing Herbert, "you shall have a chance with the rest."

Clifford's arm firmly encircled the form of the trembling maid, as despair roused him in her defence; and carrying her gently back to the wall, he snatched one of the recently deposited muskets, and placed himself before her.

"She is mine!" said the winner, turning towards Herbert, to claim her.

"Not without her permission, and that of this musket," said Clifford.

"Down with him!" shouted the whole party. Herbert drew the trigger, but, though loaded, the musket was not primed. "Down with him!" and the butt-ends of half a dozen fusils beat him senseless to the ground.

The winner caught the fainting manolla in his arms.

"Fear not, child!" said he, as he whispered in the girl's ear. "I shall use my power to

defend thee ! Trust my honour ! Marco Diaz will never injure thee !”

“ Padre !” hysterically ejaculated his captive.

The Spaniard hurriedly drew her nearer to the torch ; and his trembling knee sank to the ground—whilst his uplifted eyes, and moving, yet silent lips, evinced the thanksgiving of his heart, as he recognised his daughter.

Night had spread her mantle over the city, when Alice Downie ascended the narrow and dark staircase leading to the upper story of the building on one side of the Carcel de Corte. On hearing her well-known voice, the ancient Maritornes instantly opened the door. Without waiting to question her, she flew from room to room, as if words would be too slow or too ambiguous to convey the certainty of Manuella’s return. All was still !

“ Manolita !” faintly ejaculated Alice, using the habitual endearing diminutive of the name, and casting a hesitating, inquiring look at

Maritornes. The old nurse replied merely by a shake of the head.

Strange as it may appear, Alice, who had never been a mother, was now a prey to all the agonizing despair of a parent who has lost an only child. She had missed Manuella in the rush of the crowd, when the wild bull sprang towards them. She instantly retraced her steps; then, frantic with fear, she ran over the deserted plain—returned—threaded, with the speed of hope, the crowds pouring through the gates of Alcala, and cried, or rather shrieked, “Manolita!”—whilst the laughing, merry groups she passed bestowed upon her anxiety the epithet of madness. All was in vain; and now, as she entered the apartments, her last hope was gone.

Although not the mother of Manuella, yet with the doting heart of a parent did she yearn towards her adopted one. It would almost seem that she had ceased to live for herself, and that the daughter of the hangman had become the

link connecting her personal existence with the world. There was an undefined sympathy that united Alice the estranged from, to Manuella the inadmissible in, society: one had severed the ties of social life; the other had never known them. The love of a parent, although more natural, could not be more pure and devoted than that which Alice bore to Manuella.

Exhausted — breathless — her hearing was strained to catch the sound of a footstep—of that soft, light step that would bring back the object of all her hopes, her own Manolita; but everything remained still, and the deserted apartments of the executioner reverberated no sound either of inmate or stranger.

It were difficult to trace the origin of a sentiment so deep, and so ennobling to the soul, as that of Alice toward her adopted. In the polluted soil of a world-worn heart was deposited a germ, from which sprang a shoot of virtue, lonely, but beautiful and vigorous, amidst the briars of sin.

Again she sprang forward, descended the steps, and, issuing forth, explored the labyrinth of streets ; her step was that of youth ; with the excitement of reviving hope, it was untiring and quick, like a miser's in quest of his ravished store. Considerably after the midnight hour, along the silent and narrow streets, the now agonized Alice still proceeded, though rapidly sinking into utter despair. The drowsy serenos (watchmen), bearing their dim lamps at the end of their lances, formed at length the only visible relics of the living.

“ Have you seen my child, my beautiful Manolita ?”

“ Mad one !” was the reply.

A streak of light was in the east ; the first faint rays of a yet wintry sun were streaming through the wood of the Retiro, as Alice measured the boundary wall between the gates of Alcala and Fuencarral. There was a group of men in the distance, who had just entered

the city ;—the gates were now thrown open with the dawn. Her heart and step leaped towards them. “ *They* might have seen her !—nay, they might be conducting her home !” She ran forward : she saw them bearing a body upon a brancard ; it was concealed by a coarse blanket. As the condemned, emerging from their dungeon, again behold the light of day, whilst for a few brief moments it illuminates their steps to the scaffold, so did the flash of hope light up Alice’s heart, which soon withered again with that fading beam. She neither walked nor ran up to the body : it was an electric impulse : her feet slid along the ground, her hand lifted a corner of the covering of the litter, and her icy gaze received once more a cheering light, as it fell on the features of Herbert De Clifford.

Alice felt a momentary exultation. Manuella yet might live ! and again, with the impetus of fear rather than hope, she turned her steps towards the Carcel de Corte.

As she passed the fountain at the Puerta del Sol, which was already surrounded by the laborious Galiegos watermen, her wild and hurried step drew the notice of one who stopped his cry of "Agua! quien beve?" to address her.

"Por la Virgen de las Augustus! thou shalt pay the toll!"

Staggered with his embrace, the veil of the half-frenzied woman fell back.

"Que bruja!" and his comrades, perceiving the haggard countenance of Alice Downie, raised a laugh at the expense of their amorous companion.

Hopeless, and sick at heart, she reached with wearied, faltering steps the hangman's abode. One glance—one shriek of frantic joy—and she dropped over the reclining and attenuated form of her returned Manolita.

CHAPTER XV.

"——— If you disembowel me to-day, I'll give you leave to powder
me, and eat me too, to-morrow."

* * * * *
"The better part of valour is—discretion; in the which better part I
have saved my life." FALSTAFF.

A few words in explanation respecting Herbert De Clifford—Don Carlos and the Priesthood—Mine Host of the Gridiron and his Venta—Heroism of Colonel MacMaw.

THE quadrilla of Carlist Facciosos, which surprised Herbert and his fair companion in the enclosure of the cemetery, ranked amongst its numbers one who avoided his recognition, but, fortunately for his safety, (even for his life,) had

interfered in his behalf. Pasquale, the valet of Montreil, as well as creature of the Cura Merino, opportunely stepped in to spare the young Englishman from that merciless chastisement which, but for his intercession, would have rendered the spot an appropriate domicile for him ever after. Securing the assistance of his comrades, Pasquale contrived to stretch De Clifford upon the lid of a coffin which was newly deposited in the charnel-house, and, covering him with his own manta, he directed them to deposit their burthen at his master's gate.

As day began to dawn, the motley associates hastened to disperse, and re-entered the city at different points. Pasquale, with two companions, made a circuit to the gate of Toledo, and, as soon as it was opened, entered the purlieus of the barrios bajos. His absence from home on similar pursuits was, of course, satisfactorily accounted for to Montreil, who was

himself initiated into the revolutionary proceedings of the faction.

Under pretence of facilitating the Chevalier's communications with the insurgents, Pasqale had entered his service as a spy of the Cura Merino; but Montreil, well aware of this position, contrived to flatter him by an apparent confidence; and, to colour such proceedings as might have created distrust, he forestalled the surmises of his valet—alleging, for any apparent support of the Christinos, that it was put on to mask his machinations in behalf of Don Carlos.

But the discernment of the wily Spaniard had been underrated by Montreil. "No man is a hero to his valet," and the domestic soon learnt to appreciate the integrity of his master's principles. Even in communication with the Cura Merino, who was virtually his chief, notes were compared which began to shake their trust, and a ready poniard awaited but a word

from the warlike Cura to be plunged to the heart of the Chevalier, when manifested to be a traitor.

Montreil had given out that he was an interested contractor for the fire-arms which were supplied, the Facciosos by their English partisans. This was still believed ; and served, on more than one occasion, to allay the growing suspicion of his being a mere adventurer. From the general store at the cemetery, where the arms were first deposited, the distribution was made to the aficionados. Hither the Dominicans of the Convent of Santo Tomaso, the Carmelite Descalzos of the calle de Alcalá, the monks of La Trinidad Calzada, performed a daily pilgrimage, returning with other implements of their avocation than the blessed crucifix. Nor less active in the cause were the inmates of two of the nunneries. These pious recluses, under pretext of doling out alms and food to their indigent parishioners, distributed

a formidable supply of cartridges of British powder.

But, with these few exceptions, the clergy of the metropolis were lukewarm in their support of Don Carlos. The quadruple alliance had strengthened the partisans of the young Queen, and the ecclesiastics reserved the expression of their fealty for the eventual favourite of fortune. That day had passed by when, from the pulpit, curates and friars could preach and exhort their hearers to shed the blood of fellow-men because it was *tainted* with a love of liberty — when hatred, revenge, and extermination were suggested from the altar to a greedy herd of fanatics, eager to commit abominations which they were taught to regard as a claim to heaven. Those frightful effects of Catholic excommunication — the atrocious excesses incited, in the name of the Most Holy, against the Liberals, when la grande armée of intervention acquired an ignominious immortality at the pass of the Trocadero —

had slowly, but gradually, undermined ecclesiastical influence ; and the sequel has proved that neither Don Carlos, nor the government at the metropolis, has heeded or valued it near as much as was at first supposed.

Whether sincere or assumed, it was, at all events, a master policy in Don Carlos to shew his independence of the clergy. The time was come when the sway of the confessional had lost its terrors ; and this line of conduct added to his success, and won the hearts of many whose previous opposition had been merely grounded upon a dread (which Report had circulated) that his was the cause of the Inquisition. That barrier to their preference being removed by his uncompromising conduct towards the priesthood, the war became one for a pure question of right, in which, perhaps, the brother of the late king acquired more conscientious partisans than his antagonists.

Mine host of “the Gridiron,” in the Calle-

juela de —— of the barrios bajos, was as smooth-tongued a Boniface as ever fleeced his customer or concealed a contrabandista through fellow-feeling. He was on the best terms with the Alguaciles of the district, which guaranteed his influence with those gangs who frequented his venta. Indeed, there was a tacit protection afforded under his roof to the violators of law, according to a tarif of reward regulated by the order of transgressions ; and the fee of evasion from justice was always loyally shared between Tio Alvarez and the officers. Reversing the mistaken adage of "set a thief to catch a thief," the maxim of mine host was "set a thief to save a thief." But woe to the paltry defaulter, whose scanty gains were insufficient to compensate the protection he received. A trip to the Plazuela de Cebada, and a twist of the garrote, was the inevitable consequence. The measure of mercy bestowed, upon the principle of the worthy Alvarez, was contrary to the generally

adopted proportion respecting the booty ; and as an effect hereof, the criminal who could produce no cash was recommended, as mine host would appropriately observe, to the Fountain of Grace. Moreover, an occasional tribute to the law served to protect the reputation of the house, and Tio Alvarez gradually acquired the character of a conscientious and upright landlord.

But, thanks to the Facciosos, the dwelling of the aspiring Alvarez was not only resorted to by vagrants and outlaws ; his subtle means and powers had not escaped observation from others ; whilst the fees which were lavished on the knaves of office becoming of greater magnitude, more friendly and less interfering became the guardians of the public safety.

“ Vaya,” said mine host of the Gridiron, as a trio of his customers, seated in a corner of the tap-room, were discussing the merits of some Val-de-Peñas, “ while the balance is doubtful, the Frailes will never be the make-weight.”

" You are pretty correct : till the tables are turned, and the Christinos are in their rotation facciosos, we shall never see the colour of their money.—The Cura Merino, after all, is the most loyal apostolico, though he never invokes the name of the blessed Virgin but with a curse and a discharge of his blunderbuss."

" Ay, then they will sneak out, preach absolution for the slaughter of the liberals, and come in for a share of the plunder."

" Segun y conforme—they may be mistaken for once."

" What news from the King ?" interrupted Pasquale, the servant of Montreil, who was one of the trio ensconced in the dark corner of the venta.

" Hombre!—have you not heard ?"

But the important communication was suddenly interrupted by a confused noise ; and a train of a different order of guests now made its appearance, giving vent to a degree of volubility,

in which the screams of women, the blubbering of children, and the imprecations of men, formed a very pandemonium of discord.

Vain would have been the task to gather, from such incoherent ejaculations, the nature of their distress. But the sapient Alvarez soon initiated his guests.

The seventy voluntarios realistas under sentence of death for revolt the day of the proclamation of the young Queen, were that night to be marched off to Ceuta. The news had just transpired. The mothers, wives, and mistresses of the unfortunates, wild with despair, ran about the Barrios, rending the air with shrieks and lamentations. The sons, fathers, and brothers of the wretched men, concentrating their grief, formed groups, in whose countenances the workings of rage and revenge were of terrific meaning. Those who had collected in the venta of Tio Alvarez, less sullen from the security felt under his roof, gave breath to their indignation

without restraint; and a volley of execrations was bestowed upon the Queen Regent and her progeny; whilst, to the dismay of the landlord and Pasquale, (who suddenly took his departure,) the proscribed shout of "Viva Carlos Quinto" was raised in their daring indignation.

The rebellious cry was heard at the guard-house of the Rastro; but the picquet not being strong enough to put down a tumult, messengers were despatched to the barracks, and the regiment of the heroic Mac Maw was mustered and ordered to the spot. Our valiant friend himself, however, entertained two engrossing considerations, which unfortunately clashed with each other. First and foremost was a praiseworthy care of his own valuable person; opposed where-to was the anticipated reward of his prowess—that beacon to his hopes—a general's sash. To satisfy the primary consideration, he prudently permitted his gallant squadron to precede him; and having allowed a reasonable delay for ope-

rations, to remove danger, he (in hopes of obtaining the second) judiciously appeared just time enough to share the reward of others' bravery. The foresight of this policy was verified, inasmuch as the colonel's personal safety was concerned ; and when he reined in his charger to note operations, nothing remained on the scene of contest but the slaughtered bodies of a few women and children, and his own invincible brigade, masters of the field.

The pompous memorial of this event, transmitted by the noble colonel to head-quarters, received the encomiums of the Queen's government ; but unluckily for the hopes of MacMaw, Her Majesty's advisers judged it best to take no farther notice of the occurrence, lest it should form an acknowledgment of the numerous partisans of the pretender in the very metropolis of her dominions.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Dans toutes les villes, les Templiers avaient, du centre de leurs couvents aux marches, un conduit souterrain afin de pouvoir enlever de suite les pièces les plus fines."

THEATRE DE LA GUERRE, OU TABLEAU D'ESPAGNE.

Fraternity of the Jesuits—their Downfall and Restoration—Influence of Don Rodrigo—A Picture of an Old Castilian Hidalgo—His lordly Lady—The threatened Sacrifice.

At midnight, March 31, 1767, large bodies of military surrounded the six colleges of the Jesuits in Madrid, forced the gates, secured the bells, and collected the fathers in the refectory, who were immediately put into carriages pre-

viously placed at proper stations, and were on their way to Carthagena before the inhabitants of the city had any intelligence of the transaction. All their property was confiscated, and the strictest silence on the subject of their expulsion was enjoined, under the penalty for high treason.

When, after a long absence, they were again reinstated in their dwellings at Madrid, the fathers were observed to return lonely and unembarrassed with wealth ; yet, by degrees, the treasures of their temples, which had vanished on their expulsion, were again spread upon the holy altars, the costly symbols were recognised, and it was whispered that the sacred store had never been carried away, but concealed in the vaults and grotto-like recesses of their churches ; so securely had those expelled ecclesiastics calculated on their recal.

In the most bigoted age of priestcraft alone could that society have been permitted, with

impunity, to assume sacrilegiously the title of Jesus. Never did any association obtain such enduring or extensive sway ; and, though the vigilance of more ancient monastic orders strove to suppress them, such was the able policy of that fraternity, that the wealth and talent of catholic Europe was enlisted under their banner, and the mightiest monarchs became disciples of their institution.

More wily than other spiritual communities, they employed the most profound lore of the times in appealing to reason as well as to the senses ; and whilst the artifices of other fraternities were amply exercised by them, a wide scope for power was afforded from the control which learning ever acquires over the vulgar. Never did monarch hold such extensive dominion. The confessors and counsellors of kings, they ruled *them* as well as their subjects, and held in fee the consciences of mankind.

But whilst by soundness of learning and

force of argument they appealed to the stronger judgment of man, they failed not to cultivate every refinement and accomplishment of the times, in order to compass their end with the weaker sex. Thus the Jesuit missionaries were distinguished alike for elegance of person and studied grace of demeanour ; and powerful advocates of their order were ever to be found amongst beauty and aristocracy.

We may hence account for the unbounded sway exercised by Padre Rodrigo over the mind of the haughty Doña Mariquita. A range worthy indeed of the spirit of the Jesuit existed in her domestic circle. Already had one fair daughter of the worthy hidalgo, Don Ruy Nepomuceno de Valmarino, fallen a victim to Rodrigo's powerful influence by her union with the decrepit, but wealthy, Marquis de Olivares ; and on her anticipated early widowhood he calculated still farther to enrich his crafty order. His subtle policy had now for some time been employed in

estranging from the confidence of Doña Mariquita her affianced son in law, the Conde de Nuñez. Political controversy was the barrier he had raised between them, and so successfully had he carried on his machinations, as to have already caused Isidro's banishment from the Carlist hidalgo's house, at the special interposition of the reigning authorities. By such means his second plot was partly effected—his next aim being to introduce a creature of his own, in the person of the aged fiscal, as a suitor to the fair Juanita, ere a revocation of the harsh decree should recall to his accustomed position in the family the ill-starred and obnoxious partisan of the Queen, Isidro Conde de Nuñez.

But the Jesuit's influence extended only in an indirect manner to the worthy consort of Doña Mariquita.

The old and much-revered hidalgo, Don Nepomuceno de Valmarino, was a bright and noble specimen of the grave Castilian. Of an

ancient and honourable line, he had been bred in a full sense of his ancestral renown ; and, truth to say, few Spanish Dons even could trace back as unsullied a race as that of our worthy friend ; but the dignity of his conduct, and his uncompromising principles of rectitude, gave additional lustre to his noble escutcheon. Thus, the factitious titles of noblesse were no chimera in him ; his elevated mind threw an atmosphere around, in which prescriptive merit acquired reality. His foes respected, his friends reverenced and loved him, and the Carlists proudly numbered him amongst their ranks. The ex-chancellor had given up office on the disinheritance of his prince and benefactor, Don Carlos, from the throne ; but, though he retired from power, he had not retired from the world ; or, rather, the world had not retired from him ; and if many a sincere adherent to the cause of Isabel regretted the course he pursued, they knew him to be an

open and generous opponent; and, although he was under the watchful eyes of government, policy induced the latter to tolerate the frankness of his opposition, rather than vex the growing spirit of liberalism and freedom of opinion, by persecution of the universally-beloved hidalgo.

In his private life there was an almost infantine simplicity about him, strongly contrasted by the austere high bearing of his wife: but for his grey hairs, he might have been taken, in the bosom of his family, as the playful associate of his children. And truly, when Doña Mariquita assumed domestic authority, the tacit and complying hidalgo himself set a lesson of obedience, which added immensely to her control, and to the intimidation of the filial subjects of her government.

"The overtures of the Fiscal, our noble friend, are worthy attention," said the Doña, with becoming gravity, to her husband.

“But hast thou consulted Juanita? Does she for ever renounce her betrothed?”

“Thus it is!—you always mar my projects. What!” continued the Doña, “would you suffer your daughter to have a will of her own? Is not our choice of her future establishment that of prudence and affection?”

“Very well!” said the obliging hidalgo, who cautiously eyed the coming hurricane, and retreated betimes into the harbour of compliance.

“And pray, Señor Don Nepomuceno, is not the Fiscal a presentable man?—a Bizcayno—noble—rich?”

“Very well!” drawled the worthy and peaceable hidalgo.

“Is he not a partisan of our rightful King, Don Carlos?—a Realista to the heart?”

“Very well!” reiterated the hidalgo, still more softly.

"She *shall have him!*" pursued her Excellency, as, suiting her action to the word, the floor resounded with the stamp of her foot.

"Very well!"

"Very well! very well! very well!" repeated the enraged Doña Mariquita; "no more of that! I hate such mouthing of your thoughts! But the subject shall be decided at once!"—and, seizing the bell, she ordered the attendant to summon her daughter to her presence.

The hidalgo was passive under the volley of abuse: perhaps he entered into the ambitious views of the Doña; copying the example of many parents, who, having trained up their offspring at every cost of education, look upon them with equal jealousy of possession as they would upon a freehold whereon considerable capital has been sunk for its embellishment. In common with such, the Doña never once contemplated that a will independent of her own

might, in such a serious consideration as that of embarking, for life, fortune and affection, oppose her designs.

Meanwhile, according to the prejudice of the times and the country, the parents of the devoted Juanita were accounted both indulgent and liberal. They had not immured their daughters in a convent in order that the bulk of their property might be secured to the eldest son ; neither had they beset their unexpanded minds with ghostly and stipendiary counsellors, to seize upon and pervert the first dawn of judgment, and to lead them on, unwilling sacrifices, to a living sepulchre. But this forbearance might be traced to a mere selfish calculation. The Doña, as she saw her sweet daughters grow up with increased loveliness, speculated on the advantages to be derived from matrimonial bargains, wherein beauty and fascination would be estimated as a dowry, and would thus, without weakening the patrimonial entail, yet secure

alliances with the great, and render more certain the general aggrandizement of the family.

It was therefore with indignation this lady heard the first suggestion that her daughter's choice might not accord with her own, and that Juanita might possibly be revolted, on entering life, at finding herself bestowed in marriage on one upon the verge of the grave, and shudder at the prospect of those sunny, but transitory, years of woman's life, being passed in nursing the infirmities of peevish age, and sympathising with a satyr.

Ably had Rodrigo laid his plans for the accomplishment of the matrimonial contract, albeit the Fiscal himself would never have made overtures for the interesting Juanita but at his instigation. The Jesuit, too, had a second interest at heart in favouring this officer of the crown; for, in the corrupt administration of the realm, many were the advantages to be derived by his crafty order at the intercession, or, at

least, through the connivance, of such a functionary as the old Fiscal. Moreover, the increasing unpopularity of that order now urged its votaries to hang on the meanest prop for support —nay, almost for very existence. In the courts of law, where they no longer ruled the verdict by their sway in the confessional, intrigue of a more compromising order was had recourse to.

Leaning on her sister's arm, the meek, dejected Juanita made her appearance. So mild, yet wan, was her placid countenance, that the old hidalgo turned to gaze upon it, as a contrast to that of the imperious Doña.

On her mother's direction for her to leave the room, Merced suffered the trembling form of her sister to glide into her father's embrace, and disappeared.

“Our noble friend,” resumed the Doña, as she assumed the solemnity becoming her titled Castilian blood—“our noble friend the Fiscal has honoured the family with a proposal of

matrimony, and his choice has fallen upon you. Our love, and wise consideration of your happiness, have sealed the welcome of his offer. Daughter ! you must prepare to be a bride !”

The eyes of Juanita had been fixed upon the ground ; but they were raised for a moment as the name of the Fiscal was pronounced, and a tremulous movement of her features rapidly followed, but they soon resumed again their accustomed placidity.

“ Has my daughter no thanks for a parent's consideration of her establishment in life ?”

Juanita shuddered.

“ Speak ! Must I condescend to ask if our choice meets your approval ?”

“ I obey, Señora !” said the trembling girl, who had dared to love, but never to give a negative to her mother's command.

“ Go ! prepare for his visit to-day, and wear a smile upon your cheek. A bridegroom's hope must not be damped ere the wedding !”

Not waiting for any further expression of assent, nor once glancing to mark the effect of her injunctions upon the dutiful victim, Doña Mariquita passed on to an adjoining apartment to receive the Fiscal, who was just announced, and to impart the glad tidings of her daughter's acceptance of his suit.

CHAPTER XVII.

" Aux tems passés au siècle d'or,
Crosse de bois, évêque d'or;
Maintenant qu'ont changé les loix,
Crosse d'or, évêque de bois."

Good Friday and Easter Day—Saints and Sinners.

UNIVERSAL mourning for the anniversary of the death of our Saviour prevails in Spain throughout Passion Week. Devotion, unsophisticated and profound, is exemplified in every Spaniard. The fearful strides that have been taken over Europe under the plea of moral liberty, and which have been, in a measure, subversive of religion itself, though extended to the Penin-

sula, have not, to the honour of Spaniards, trespassed upon the altar of their faith. The ultra-exaltado, true to the God of his fore-fathers, has steered, with Christian judgment, within the pale of reverence to his Maker ; and if he has warred against the servants of the church, it has not been for the use, but the abuse of their trust.

Early in the week preceding Easter-day, a solemn stillness pervades the usually bustling resorts of the capital. The bells—the thousand, thousand bells— are silenced ; no deafening summons to complines are heard. The faithful intuitively bend their steps to church, while contrition and meekness subdue each penitent heart. At the altar, pencilled to the life, a Spagnoletto, or a Murillo, reveals the dying agonies of his God ; whilst from the pulpit the worshipper hears elucidated the invaluable expiation for the salvation of mankind.

The lights upon the altars are extinguished ;

worldly traffic is suspended ; beasts of burden have a respite. No carriage is suffered to rattle over the pavement of Madrid—royalty itself is forbidden such indulgence. To the gaze of a foreigner, the mantle of mourning seems spread over the whole country. The bright smiling canopy of heaven alone cheers the soul amidst the death-like gloom around. As if the catastrophe of all things were at hand, universal man is humbled before his Maker.

In that prevailing stillness—which succeeds to the tumult of a city like the silence of night, or that undisturbed quietude when contagion has breathed upon a vast population,—strangely breaks on the ear the heavy and measured tread of troopers marching to mass. The horse-grenadiers advance, dismounted, their carabines pointed to earth ; the tramp of a thousand feet, as they fall in time, unaccompanied by the sound of martial trumpet or drum, produces a new sensation. Sable, as we have already said, is the

dress of all. The mantilla of black crape shrouds every fair head. The golden chalice, meanwhile, with the holy sacrament, the holy-water stick, the mass-book, the crucifix, the altar-piece, all are veiled in black. But the doors leading to the great altar are left open. "It is the house of the living God, who is absent for awhile."

Merrily, merrily, ring all the bells of the churches of Spain as they proclaim the resurrection of the Redeemer. The pavement of Madrid is overspread with fine sand, and strewn with flowers. From the Yglesia Mayor up the calle of Carretas, the Puerta, the Calle, and Plaza Mayor, a beautiful awning, of the width of the streets, is extended from roof to roof, designating the course to be taken by the procession of the Jubilee of the church. The beams of a noon-day sun, softened in their fall for the bare-headed monks, are alike rendered courteous to the moving galaxy of beauty and fashion, and to the elegant groups

who crowd the balconies of every story. The mourning is cast away; exultation and joy lend an angelic expression to the graceful Madrileñas. The white lace mantilla predominates; here and there a cœffure Française loses its pre-eminence by comparison — the innovation detracting from the gracefulness of native costume.

The pomp and magnificence that characterize the procession on this day, which, from the Vatican, sweeps, with a host of priests and acolytes, along the avenues of St. Peter—the cortège of the self-styled vicar of heaven—may be more profuse of numbers and trappings; but thrice Catholic and Apostolic Spain, the cradle of the holy inquisition, the fostering home of Jesuitism, sends forth, on this auspicious anniversary, from the cathedrals of Toledo and Seville, of Valencia, Campostello, and Saragossa, for the gaze and devotion of the faithful, not only a superior quantity of uncontested relics of sanctity and martyrdom, but an accompanying

wealth of ornament, wrung from idolators and heathens in that world which Columbus gave away to Catholic Ferdinand and Isabel of Castile; and where the religion of the blessed Cross was engrafted by the sword, and the light of Christianity spread by the firebrands of war.

Though not to be compared with the display evinced on this festival at Toledo, the procession which leaves the parochial church of the capital is still of an imposing order, and the court lends it a degree of splendour which makes some amends for the absence of those paraphernalia which higher benefices possess.

The grand master of the royal household presides over the arrangement. A band of music opens the march, which is succeeded by the children of the Foundling Hospital: then are borne the banners of the several parishes of Madrid, followed by the brothers of the Hospitals of the Capuchins, the bare-footed Mercenarios

and Augustins, the Miriunos, the Trinitarians, the Carmelites, the Dominicans,—and, indeed, every order which pertains to the hundred churches and monasteries of the Spanish metropolis.

Far as the eye can reach sweeps the gorgeous train. Preceding the dais, is borne the cross of the royal chapel; while, guarded by clergy and military, are supported the treasured remains of beatified mortals. The church of San Bernardino de Religiosos descalzas de San Francisco, alone, contributes the bodies of San Alexandro, San Guillermo, and San Eustachio, “con otras muchas reliquias;” and the convent of Nuestra Señora de la Piedad de Religiosas descalzas del Orden de San Francisco swells the intrinsic wealth of the exhibition with no less an acquisition than the bodies of San Victor Alferez the martyr, of the Thebeian Legion—brought to Madrid by the Princess Anna, as part of her marriage portion to Philip the Second; together with the

remains of San Valerio Obispo, bequeathed by the Empress Maria in 1582. Immediately before the dais come the royal band, the pages of the Sovereign, the counsellors of state, and the council of Castella. The dais is supported by regidors, and surrounded by the bearers of censers. Before the hostie, the multitude is bowed and prostrate. Solemn and profound is the Spaniard's intent devotion. The military alone, forming a line on each side, are exempted from this act of worship.

The procession is closed with a choice detachment of horse-grenadiers, commanded by their colonel.

Before the house of Ruy de Valmarino the holy cortège has made one of its occasional halts. The swelling anthem is raised by the pious multitude. In the balconies, right and left, crowded with beauty and fashion, for an instant every lighter thought gives way to inward prayer.

At that moment, a young and trembling girl, as she turned to gaze upon the pompous retinue of the church, encountered the searching glance of the Colonel of the guards, and, grateful for the plea afforded by the elevated hostie, sank upon her knees,—the eyes of Isidro and Juanita had met.

On moved the exulting servants of the church. Solace and joy were diffused to the faithful around ; but the lingering, long-lingered look which followed the soldiers' progress, as they slowly wended their sumptuous way, interpreted, in its saddened light, the pang of despair in its owner's heart.

Many an expectant bosom has awaited the jubilee of Easter-day. Captives, whom it were sacrilege to forbid witnessing the holy festival, for once escape the jealous thraldom of their jailors, whether husbands or fathers. One of that interesting class had skipped along over the flinty pavement from a remote suburb of the city, led by, or rather supporting, an ascetic-looking per-

sonage, evidently labouring under the excitement of haste, in addition to the rays of a meridian sun showered down upon the impenetrable capa.

"Hija!" gasped the sufferer, as his nimble-footed companion, under pretext of gaining a full view of the procession, came to a full stop immediately opposite the mansion of the Hidalgo Valmarino, "Que priesa niña!"

But heedless was his animated guide, as her bright large eyes were fixed upon the balcony before her. They had ranged rapidly as electricity in their survey; but fruitless was the result. The hidalgo and his mate were there; and in the adjoining balcony were his beautiful daughters, Herbert de Clifford, and other friends of the house, alike uninteresting to the prying glance of the young Madrileña. In vain she lingered, in expectation that the object of her interest would appear. The procession passed on; the anthem died upon her ear; the last of the spectators had dwindled away; and as the company

at Don Ruy's withdrew into the apartments, the casements were closed upon them.

"Vamos bendita!" said the elderly personage whom she held by her arm, "a comida chica?"

At the word a look of impatience was put on. But the rebuke was instantly suppressed, and, as it had recalled her momentarily from her disappointment, she suffered him to lead the way; but the light-hearted spirit and buoyant step, which had brought her thus far, deserted her on her homeward course, and left her companion that leisure, which his apparent feebleness needed, to accomplish the distance.

Pepe Manzanos was one of a numerous class, who, driven by adversity from a better sphere of society, seek retirement in a distant and obscure part of the city, with the twofold object of concealing their poverty, and limiting their expenditure. Upon the wreck of a fortune, embezzled from him by the nefarious practices of an iniquitous government, and which, from a

keen sense of honour, he had not defended with knavery similar to that which had been the salvation of others, he contrived to maintain existence, with an only child, left in his widowhood. Paquita was the main-spring of his hopes—the focus where centered every affection. Rapidly declining in health, his mind was saddened by anxiety for the orphan who would survive him without inheriting adequate means to provide for her independence. Still there was a radiance imparted by the virtues of his child which solaced his noble breast.

But the severest trial of all was yet in store for the worthy Castilian; and she, who was the beacon whereto all his remaining hopes pointed, was doomed to be the destroyer of that honourable pride which had borne him up through the vicissitudes of his important career.

Don Jayme de Valmarino had ingratiated himself with Pepe Manzanos,—gained access to his humble abode, and, under pretence of affec-

tion for the cause of Don Carlos, had found a ready way to the poor Castilian's heart. But the secret of his visits—for his artfulness enabled him to delude the trusting parent—was the beautiful child. Success crowned the insidious designs of a villain—and Paquita became his victim.

The vows that won her too credulous heart were soon broken. In the first place, Jayme's assiduities relaxed — his visits grew more scarce and abrupt. Still (from a secret dread of disclosure) he warily accounted to her for his absence in a manner which, if it did not solace her love, satisfied her pride; and Paquita loved on in secrecy and hope.

The day of the festival, however, was a plea for going abroad. Jayme had been absent longer than usual; and the road she took her father, under pretence of witnessing the procession, was that to the house of Don Ruy de Valmarino. She had looked in vain for her lover,

till, sick at heart, she regained, with her father, their humble abode.

The remembrance of Paquita had obtruded itself upon Jayme that very hour. He bethought himself of the expediency of cajoling the poor girl ; lest, prompted by too sudden a discovery of his treachery, she should wreak that vengeance which, from an injured Spanish woman, is often fatal. Still the visit was irksome. In the society of an artless, single-minded girl, whose generosity was only equalled by her devotion to him, nothing remained to be received. The depths of art had not instructed her to mete out her fondness — to hold in reserve a lure for her lover's return. All that nature had endowed her with, in one full gift she bestowed ; and the heartless Jayme now experienced an indefinite feeling of reluctance at the thought of encountering one who yet cherished him as worthy of her pure regard. His amour with Paquita had been an episode in his career of intrigue ; and he

now turned, with renewed assiduity, to the shrine of a fair one more hackneyed in the wiles of duplicity and seduction. The Contesa Mariposa was an anomaly in the character of a Spanish woman. She was a coquette, and, as a matter of course, had suffered the handsome Jayme to be seen in her train. Versed herself in the mazes of intrigue, she readily secured her prey; but the trap she had spread for another proved, in this instance, a snare to herself; and Mariposa, in her turn, was smitten by the handsome garde du corps. With sufficient tact to conceal her own weakness, she snatched every gallant avowal from Jayme to rally him upon the fame of his amours. It was at this stage of their acquaintance, that, on the day of the procession, Don Jayme was leaning over the balcony of the Contesa's house, when Mariposa suddenly turned round, and asked him how fared the beautiful Paquita?

Her knowledge of his liaison in that quarter

might not have caused him any confusion — so practised was he in the arts of deception — but, at the moment, his eye caught a glimpse of the innocent object of the inquiry, then returning from her fruitless expedition. A deep glow suffused his cheek, and he hastily withdrew from his position at the balcony. His look and manner attracted the attention of the Contesa, and the inference she drew from this slight incident confirmed her surmises. She darted a glance of terrific meaning towards the unconscious Paquita, whilst her anger imparted anything but dread to her companion.

“ She is mine !” inwardly ejaculated the exulting Jayme ; as, eagerly snatching her hand, he said, “ Stoop not, beautiful Contesa, to such a charge. Unsuccessful as my assiduities have proved, still can a single doubt be entertained who is the lovely enchantress that holds my existence in thrall ?”

“ Perfido !”

"Be charitable, beautiful Miraposa, and ask yourself if the nipping reserve you have ever evinced towards my ardent protestations could leave one spark of hope in my breast."

The Contesa reddened with disdain.

"Alas ! if I had sought the solace of another's love, where would be the crime — where the injustice to yourself?"

Miraposa's eye was lit up with portentous meaning.

"But no ! — vain the thought—the attempt ! One form alone rises in absence from thee ; it steals between me and the world, and, in my fancy's gleam, 'tis Miraposa still !—the shadowy comfort to my passion."

Miraposa appeared to relent. For once she acted an unaffected part. "Fill the cup of flattery to the brim," says the adage, "and all that flows over is for yourself ;" and Jayme, an adept in the wiles of seduction with a certain class of his countrywomen, aptly played upon

a string which accorded with the tone of his companion's mind. Our successful Lothario, when he took his leave, gaily tripped away, secure of his conquest; already, indeed, on the "qui vive" to discover a new mistress, and to plot another intrigue, wherewith to supply the void which possession ever created in his depraved heart.

CHAPTER XVIII.

" At first, though mute she listened, like a dream
Seem'd all he said ; nor could her mind, whose beam
As yet was weak, penetrate half his scheme."

VEILED PROPHET OF KHORASSAN.

A canonized Generalissimo—The Penitent and the Priest
—Peculiar Atonement—A Visitor mal-à-propos.

THE "blessed father in God," St. Ignazio de Loyola, founder of the Holy Company of Jesus, after reposing nearly three centuries in the bosom of Abraham, was of late years called upon, by the pious and much-lamented Ferdinand VII., to perform the mundane duties of

generalissimo to the army of Spain. He had been canonized by Pope Gregory the Fifteenth, for his cardinal virtues ; and his veracious historian, Ribadeneira, asserts, that “by special favour of the blessed Virgin, he obtained an absolute freedom from all sense of desire. But even some of the warmest and best friends to his reputation have been sceptics on this point, and have contended that the body which subsisted weeks together upon a few boiled herbs sprinkled over with ashes, and submitted to be macerated by discipline thrice a day, must have been too much attenuated and sublimated for earthly longings. Others, not blest with the heavenly bulwark, have pleaded this gift of continence in their founder in order to palliate their own frailty ; whilst the irreproachable fathers of the order have often taken to themselves greater merit than St. Ignazio de Loyola, alleging that there is no virtue but where a victory has been gained through combating the passions.

Be this as it may, some instances might be adduced to bear out the text of the saint's biographer; for it is recorded, that the worthy general of the Jesuits, having (after great urging) undertaken the care of the souls of three of the fair sex, gave up the charge in utter despair after a few days' experiment, and forthwith addressed a petition to Pope Paul III., beseeching his Holiness to deliver the society from "the less necessary care of women." The vicar of Christ, touched with the earnestness of this prayer, directed that no religious community of women whatever should be forced upon Loyola, who notwithstanding, at his Holiness's particular request, despatched one of the fathers to reform a monastery of nuns, which was in great disorder,—a convincing proof of the opinion entertained of the abilities of the Jesuits in the management of feminine affairs.

Indeed, notwithstanding the tenets of the blessed Ignazio have been in a measure adhered to, and that no religious communities of ladies

have been incorporated under the name of the Society of Jesus, (with the exception of one, which was immediately suppressed,) many individual instances may be adduced of the solicitude of the order for its lovely enthusiasts. This may afford some consolation to our gentler readers; and we are not without authority in stating, that we may trace to their prevailing refinement the introduction of discipline by proxy, whereby the whipping that works salvation may be inflicted on mercenary shoulders. However, to satisfy the more exacting consciences of some fair sinners, by self-flagellation, new tactics have been introduced by the benevolent fathers, whereby the lashes are administered with graceful regularity.

Of the modern school, with such innovations as ambition and individual convenience pointed out to him, was Father Rodrigo, procurador of the Jesuit church of San Isidro. His reverence was not wont to get up betimes; and it was even hinted, (maliciously, of course,) that, in the

winter months he would move back the fingers of the clock, in order to reconcile appearances, at least, with his late rising. But on one morning of the week, the reverend Padre Rodrigo would rise before the sun, and himself take the confessional chair in the church of San Isidro, to listen to the peccadillos of poor sinners, prescribing and apportioning to each his measure of penance.

It was on such a morning that he approached the oaken cabinet appropriated to the confession; and, having locked himself within that portion of it destined to the ghostly friar, he bent his ear to the little grating, to receive the admissions of crime and folly.

Here again the worthy Padre would occasionally swerve from the precepts of the institution, heedless of the example recorded to have been set by the holy founder. When an ancient of the order forgot the rules, and listened without witness to a fair penitent, Loyola doomed him to a

severe discipline, in the presence of eight priests, during the time that each recited a psalm. On the present occasion, whether premeditatedly unattended or not, no jealous father scrutinized Rodrigo's proceedings.

"Padre Santo!" whispered a soft, female voice.

An involuntary smile pervaded the friar's face.

"Be thou blessed, child, as thou art guiltless, though not sinless!"

"Alas! Padre, I have offended Heaven!"

"Confide in me, thy counsellor. Confess!"

"Sin is in my heart. Father, have mercy!"

"What hast thou done?"

"I love him, Padre!"

"Love him!—love whom?" said the mortified Rodrigo.

"The heretic—the protestant!"

For a moment the Padre struggled to suppress his feelings. Singling out but one Englishman,

one protestant in the universe, he whom jealousy had already marked for Rodrigo's hatred, the name of De Clifford escaped his lips ! Yet while his suspicions were unconfirmed, a hope that such was not the choice of the maiden's heart softened the tone of his inquiry.

" 'Tis he !" avowed the trembling sinner at his side, and her frame shook as the confession worked upon the Jesuit's features an expression of relentless wrath.

" Then art thou lost — abandoned !" ejaculated the enraged Priest ; " there is no mercy for thee ! Hadst thou committed murder, there were hope ; but now, alas ! there is none."

" Ye holy martyrs ! blessed mother of Him whose blood is on us, have mercy ! Pity, pity, father. I will pray, and root out of my breast this guilt. O, have mercy on me !"

Rodrigo stifled his emotion.

" Tell me what I should do to tear this passion from my heart—that *will* I do ! Mark me

out penance for morning, noon, and night, and I will perform it."

Rodrigo cast a cautious glance around. The dawn had scarcely ripened into day ; the solitary aisles of the church re-echoed the distant step of Jesuits repairing to matins ; none could overhear them.

"Who art thou ?" anxiously inquired the Priest ; " 'tis necessary for thy salvation that I should know."

"Ghostly father, forbear to question : I must not, dare not tell thee !"

"Wretched girl, then go thy way. I have no power to save thee !"

"Virgin Maria, be my aid !" sobbed the agonized creature, wringing her hands.

Rodrigo could now discern, by the increasing light, features which he had scanned before. Wildly did the Priest's voluptuous glance wander over the frame of the trembling sinner, whose beauty shrouded a mortal erring heart

within the angelic livery of heaven. From infancy he had been her ghostly confessor; for there was an insinuating softness of manner about the Padre, which had encouraged the youthful heart of the penitent to disclose its inmost feelings.

"Who art thou?" reiterated the Priest, and he impatiently awaited her reply. Such dignified beauty could hardly belong to the manolla class, and yet her dress bespoke it. He trembled lest he should learn that she possessed the protection of family and rank. "As thou hopest for pardon, answer me!—thy name?"

"Manuella!"

"Thy father's rank?"

"The hangman of Madrid!"

A beam of joy lit up the eager countenance of the confessor; and the poor girl, who awaited a burst of execration, was soothed by his friendly speech.

"Daughter, be of good cheer. Follow me!"

said Rodrigo, as he left the confessional chair.
She moved on in the steps of her guide.

On leaving the porch of the church, the friar led the way to one of those dreary and silent lanes that run parallel with the boundary wall from the gate of Toledo to that of Segovia. At so early an hour, none were moving along that gloomy length of dead wall.

“Manuella!” said Rodrigo, stopping suddenly and looking carefully around, “I will give thee a task of penance; perform it faithfully, and for thy deadly sin there shall be absolution!”

“Holy father! but whither dost thou lead me?” said the affrighted girl, as she regarded the continued extent of wall that formed the avenue.

“Mark me! There lives near this place a desolate wretch, even now on the threshold of eternity. Be thine the task to wait her spirit’s flight, and soothe with prayer her last repentant

moments. Strengthen her poor soul by thy devout aspirations, and point the way it should traverse to heaven: the salvation of *that* soul shall be the pledge of thine own. Follow!"

Obedient through wonder and holy zeal, the confiding Manuella pursued the course of the Priest. As he approached the outward wall of the city that ran parallel with the Mauzanares, there appeared a solitary small house that broke the even line of wall. Here Rodrigo stopped, and, grasping the girl's arm with decision, he pushed back the door.

"Quien?" shrilly cried a female voice.

"Gente de Paz!" softly replied the cautious priest, as he led the way up a narrow staircase.

They were met on the landing by an old woman, who, apparently, had been just roused from sleep.

"Art thou alone, Jemima?" whispered the Priest.

"Padre, yes," said the woman, and she

stroked back the entangled and scanty tresses of her grey hair, whilst her eyes expressed a cunning comprehension as she led the way into a chamber.

“Leave us!” added the Jesuit, and the practised Jemima left the room, closing the door.

“Manuella!” said Rodrigo, as he threw back his cowl, whilst his looks seemed to devour the trembling maid, “for peculiar sins there is peculiar atonement; the love thou bearest to the heretic must yield to mine!”

Manuella stood fixed in astonishment, yet doubtful if she heard aright.

“Beautiful Manuella! thou must learn to love *me*! Even now, this very hour, shalt thou be mine.”

Impelled by terror, she sprang towards the door.

“ ‘Tis useless to oppose me,” said the smiling Priest, bringing her back; “no call for aid, no shriek of woman’s voice, would reach a living

soul in this secluded place ; and here," drawing from the folds of his ample Jesuit cloak a loaded pistol, "here is withal to silence any intruder!"

A scream, piercing and shrill, penetrated the silent chambers of that detested abode ; the unconscious Manuella fell to the ground.

The voluptuous Priest gazed irresolutely upon her ; but, recovering from that momentary appeal of conscience, his profane hand stripped the veil from her neck, and he hung entranced over that bosom of beauty and innocence.

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"Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !" A loud, gross, stentorian laugh saluted the Friar's ear ; he grasped the loaded weapon.

"By all the saints, and all the devils to boot my worthy friend the immaculate Rodrigo!" deridingly ejaculated a voice near at hand. But what do I behold ? Ha ! that face !—it is the beautiful unknown !" Ere these words had passed the lips of the speaker, the partition

which separated a small recess from the room was violently thrown down ; and, regardless of the pointed pistol, Don Jayme, the worthy pupil and protégé of the Procurador of the College of Jesuits, stood before his confounded but saintly tutor, Don Rodrigo.

END OF VOL. I.



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